

Collins' Illustrated Dickens



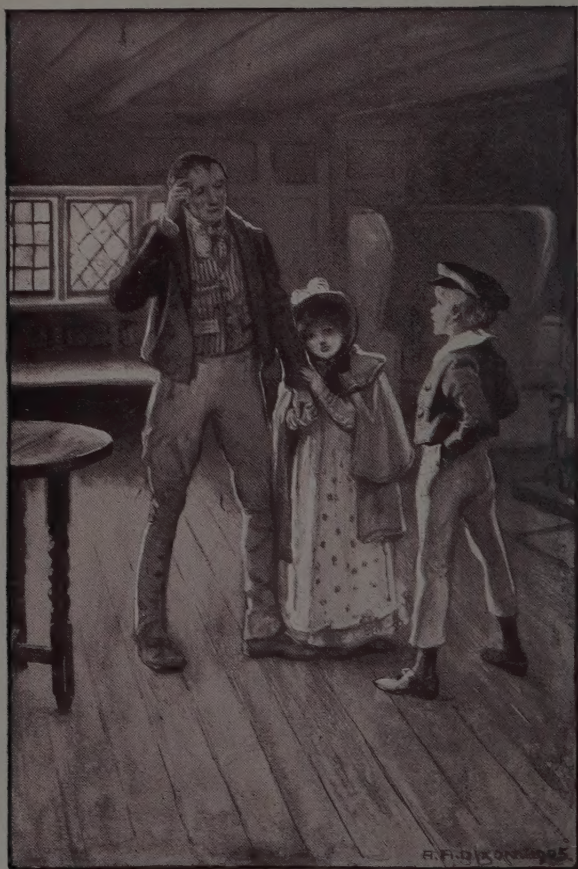
A Few of Dickens' Characters

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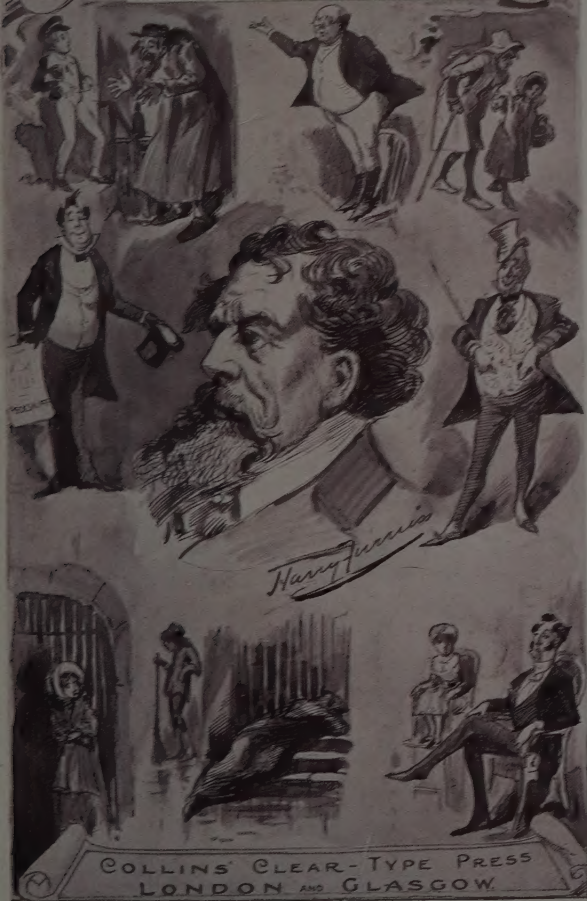
Stories and Sketches.



S.S. "What's the object of your journey, sir?" Page 81

A

STORIES AND SKETCHES
BY CHARLES DICKENS
WITH EIGHT ENGRAVINGS.



COLLINS' CLEAR-TYPE PRESS
LONDON AND GLASGOW.

Stories and Sketches

By

Charles Dickens

With

Original Engravings

London and Glasgow

Collins' Clear-Type Press

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The Seven Poor Travellers.

In Three Chapters.

The Seven Poor Travellers.

In Three Chapters.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE OLD CITY OF ROCHESTER.

STRICTLY speaking, there were only six poor travellers; but, being a traveller myself, though an idle one, and being withal as poor as I hope to be, I brought the number up to seven. This word of explanation is due at once, for what says the inscription over the quaint old door?

RICHARD WATTS, Esq.

by his Will, dated 22 Aug. 1579,

founded this Charity

for Six poor Travellers,

who not being ROGUES, or PROCTORS,

May receive gratis for one Night,

Lodging; Entertainment,

and Fourpence each.

It was in the ancient little city of Rochester in Kent, of all the good days in the year upon a Christmas Eve, that I stood reading this inscription over the quaint old door in question. I had been wandering about the neighbouring cathedral, and had seen the tomb of Richard Watts, with the effigy of worthy Master Richard starting out of it like a ship's figure-head; and I had felt that I could do no less, as I gave the verger his fee, than inquire the way to Watts's Charity. The way being very

short and very plain, I had come prosperously to the inscription and the quaint old door.

“Now,” said I to myself as I looked at the knocker, “I know I am not a proctor; I wonder whether I am a rogue!”

Upon the whole, though conscience reproduced two or three pretty faces which might have had smaller attraction for a moral Goliath than they had had for me, who am but a Tom Thumb in that way, I came to the conclusion that I was not a rogue. So, beginning to regard the establishment as in some sort my property, bequeathed to me and divers co-legatees, share and share alike, by the Worshipful Master Richard Watts, I stepped backward into the road to survey my inheritance.

I found it to be a clean white house, of a staid and venerable air, with the quaint old door already three times mentioned (an arched door), choice little long low lattice-windows, and a roof of three gables. The silent High Street of Rochester is full of gables, with old beams and timbers carved into strange faces. It is oddly garnished with a queer old clock that projects over the pavement out of a grave red-brick building, as if Time carried on business there, and hung out his sign. Sooth to say, he did an active stroke of work in Rochester, in the old days of the Romans, and the Saxons, and the Normans; and down to the times of King John, when the rugged castle—I will not undertake to say how many hundreds of years old then—was abandoned to the centuries of weather which have so defaced the dark apertures in its walls, that the ruin looks as if the rooks and daws had pecked its eyes out.

I was very well pleased, both with my property and its situation. While I was yet surveying it with growing content, I espied, at one of the upper lattices which stood open, a decent body, of a wholesome matronly appearance, whose eyes I caught inquiringly addressed to mine. They said so plainly, "Do you wish to see the house?" that I answered aloud, "Yes, if you please." And within a minute the old door opened, and I bent my head, and went down two steps into the entry.

"This," said the matronly presence, ushering me into a low room on the right, "is where the travellers sit by the fire, and cook what bits of suppers they buy with their fourpences."

"Oh! Then they have no entertainment?" said I. For the inscription over the outer door was still running in my head, and I was mentally repeating, in a kind of tune, "Lodging, entertainment, and fourpence each."

"They have a fire provided for 'em," returned the matron—a mighty civil person, not, as I could make out, overpaid—"and these cooking utensils. And this what's painted on a board is the rules for their behaviour. They have their fourpences when they get their tickets from the steward over the way—for I don't admit 'em myself; they must get their tickets first—and sometimes one buys a rasher of bacon, and another a herring, and another a pound of potatoes, or what not. Sometimes two or three of 'em will club their fourpences together, and make a supper that way. But not much of anything is to be got for fourpence, at present, when provisions is so dear."

"True indeed," I remarked. I had been looking about the room, admiring its snug fireside at the upper end, its glimpse of the street through the low mullioned window, and its beams overhead. "It is very comfortable," said I.

"Ill-convenient," observed the matronly presence.

I liked to hear her say so; for it showed a commendable anxiety to execute in no niggardly spirit the intentions of Master Richard Watts. But the room was really so well adapted to its purpose that I protested, quite enthusiastically, against her disparagement.

"Nay, ma'am," said I, "I am sure it is warm in winter and cool in summer. It has a look of homely welcome and soothing rest. It has a remarkably cosy fireside, the very blink of which, gleaming out into the street upon a winter night, is enough to warm all Rochester's heart. And as to the convenience of the six poor travellers——"

"I don't mean them," returned the presence. "I speak of its being an ill-convenience to myself and my daughter, having no other room to sit in of a night."

This was true enough, but there was another quaint room of corresponding dimensions on the opposite side of the entry: so I stepped across to it, through the open doors of both rooms, and asked what this chamber was for.

"This," returned the presence, "is the board-room. Where the gentlemen meet when they come here."

Let me see. I had counted from the street six upper windows besides these on the ground-storey.

Making a perplexed calculation in my mind, I rejoined, "Then the six poor travellers sleep upstairs?"

My new friend shook her head. "They sleep," she answered, "in two little outer galleries at the back, where their beds has always been, ever since the Charity was founded. It being so very ill-conwenient to me as things is at present, the gentlemen are going to take off a bit of the back yard, and make a slip of a room for 'em there, to sit in before they go to bed."

"And then the six poor travellers," said I, "will be entirely out of the house?"

"Entirely out of the house," assented the presence, comfortably smoothing her hands. "Which is considered much better for all parties, and much more conwenient."

I had been a little startled, in the cathedral, by the emphasis with which the effigy of Master Richard Watts was bursting out of his tomb; but I began to think, now, that it might be expected to come across the High Street some stormy night, and make a disturbance here.

Howbeit, I kept my thoughts to myself, and accompanied the presence to the little galleries at the back. I found them on a tiny scale, like the galleries in old inn-yards; and they were very clean. While I was looking at them, the matron gave me to understand that the prescribed number of poor travellers were forthcoming every night from year's end to year's end; and that the beds were always occupied. My questions upon this, and her replies, brought us back to the board-room so essential to the dignity of "the gentlemen," where she

showed me the printed accounts of the Charity hanging up by the window. From them I gathered that the greater part of the property bequeathed by the Worshipful Master Richard Watts for the maintenance of this foundation was, at the period of his death, mere marsh-land; but that, in course of time, it had been reclaimed and built upon, and was very considerably increased in value. I found, too, that about a thirtieth part of the annual revenue was now expended on the purposes commemorated in the inscription over the door; the rest being handsomely laid out in Chancery, law expenses, collectorship, receivership, poundage, and other appendages of management highly complimentary to the importance of the six poor travellers. In short, I made the not entirely new discovery that it may be said of an establishment like this, in dear old England, as of the fat oyster in the American story, that it takes a good many men to swallow it whole.

"And pray, ma'am," said I, sensible that the blankness of my face began to brighten as the thought occurred to me, "could one see these travellers?"

"Well!" she returned dubiously, "no!"

"Not to-night, for instance?" said I.

"Well!" she returned more positively, "no. Nobody ever asked to see them, and nobody ever did see them."

As I am not easily baulked in a design when I am set upon it, I urged to the good lady that this was Christmas Eve; that Christmas comes but once a year—which is unhappily too true, for when it begins to stay with us the whole year round we shall make this earth a very different place; that I was possessed by the desire to treat the travellers to a supper

THE SEVEN POOR TRAVELLERS.

and a temperate glass of hot wassail ; that the voice of Fame had been heard in that land, declaring my ability to make hot wassail ; that if I were permitted to hold the feast, I should be found conformable to reason, sobriety, and good hours ; in a word, that I could be merry and wise myself, and had been even known at a pinch to keep others so, although I was decorated with no badge or medal, and was not a brother, orator, apostle, saint, or prophet, of any denomination whatever. In the end I prevailed to my great joy. It was settled that at nine o'clock that night a turkey and a piece of roast-beef should smoke upon the board ; and that I, faint and unworthy minister for once of Master Richard Watts, should preside as the Christmas supper host of the six poor travellers.

I went back to my inn to give the necessary directions for the turkey and roast-beef, and, during the remainder of the day, could settle to nothing but thinking of the poor travellers. When the wind blew hard against the windows—it was a cold day with dark gusts of sleet alternating with periods of wild brightness, as if the year were dying fitfully—I pictured them advancing towards their resting place along various cold roads, and felt delighted to think how little they foresaw the supper that awaited them. I painted their portraits in my mind and indulged in little heightening touches. I made them footsore ; I made them weary ; I made them carry packs and bundles ; I made them stop by finger-posts and milestones, leaning on their bent sticks, and looking wistfully at what was written there ; I made them lose their way ; and filled their

five wits with apprehensions of lying out all night, and being frozen to death. I took up my hat, and went out, climbed to the top of the old castle, and looked over the windy hills that slope down to the Medway, almost believing that I could descry some of my travellers in the distance. After it fell dark, and the cathedral bell was heard in the invisible steeple—quite a bower of frosty rime when I had last seen it—striking five, six, seven, I became so full of my travellers that I could eat no dinner, and felt constrained to watch them still in the red coals of my fire. They were all arrived by this time, I thought, had got their tickets, and were gone in.—There my pleasure was dashed by the reflection that probably some travellers had come too late and were shut out.

After the cathedral bell had struck eight, I could smell a delicious savour of turkey and roast-beef rising to the window of my adjoining bedroom, which looked down into the inn-yard just where the lights of the kitchen reddened a massive fragment of the castle wall. It was high time to make the wassail now; therefore I had up the materials (which, together with their proportions and combinations, I must decline to impart, as the only secret of my own I was ever known to keep), and made a glorious jorum. Not in a bowl; for a bowl anywhere but on a shelf is a low superstition, fraught with cooling and slopping; but in a brown earthenware pitcher, tenderly suffocated, when full, with a coarse cloth. It being now upon the stroke of nine, I set out for Watts's Charity, carrying my brown beauty in my arms. I would trust Ben, the waiter, with untold gold; but there

are strings in the human heart which must never be sounded by another, and drinks that I make myself are those strings in mine.

The travellers were all assembled, the cloth was laid, and Ben had brought a great billet of wood, and had laid it artfully on the top of the fire, so that a touch or two of the poker after supper should make a roaring blaze. Having deposited my brown beauty in a red nook of the hearth, inside the fender, where she soon began to sing like an ethereal cricket, diffusing at the same time odours as of ripe vineyards, spice forests, and orange groves—I say, having stationed my beauty in a place of security and improvement, I introduced myself to my guests by shaking hands all round, and giving them a hearty welcome.

I found the party to be thus composed. Firstly, myself. Secondly, a very decent man indeed, with his right arm in a sling, who had a certain clean, agreeable smell of wood about him, from which I judged him to have something to do with shipbuilding. Thirdly, a little sailor-boy, a mere child, with a profusion of rich dark brown hair, and deep, womanly-looking eyes. Fourthly, a shabby-genteel personage in a threadbare black suit, and apparently in very bad circumstances, with a dry, suspicious look ; the absent buttons on his waistcoat eked out with red tape ; and a bundle of extraordinarily tattered papers sticking out of an inner breast-pocket. Fifthly, a foreigner by birth, but an Englishman in speech, who carried his pipe in the band of his hat, and lost no time in telling me, in an easy, simple, engaging way, that he was a watchmaker from Geneva, and travelled

all about the Continent, mostly on foot, working as a journeyman, and seeing new countries—possibly (I thought) also smuggling a watch or so, now and then. Sixthly, a little widow, who had been very pretty and was still very young, but whose beauty had been wrecked in some great misfortune, and whose manner was remarkably timid, scared, and solitary. Seventhly and lastly, a traveller of a kind familiar to my boyhood, but now almost obsolete—a book-pedlar, who had a quantity of pamphlets and numbers with him, and who presently boasted that he could repeat more verses in an evening than he could sell in a twelvemonth.

All these I have mentioned in the order in which they sat at table. I presided, and the matronly presence faced me. We were not long in taking our places, for the supper had arrived with me, in the following procession :—

Myself with the pitcher.

Ben with beer.

Inattentive boy with hot plates. Inattentive boy with hot plates.

THE TURKEY.

Female carrying sauces to be heated on the spot.

THE BEEF.

Man with tray on his head, containing vegetables and sundries.

Volunteer hostler from hotel, grinning,

And rendering no assistance.

As we passed along the High Street, comet-like, we left a long tail of fragrance behind us which caused the public to stop, sniffing in wonder. We had previously left at the corner of the inn-yard a wall-eyed young man connected with the fly department, and well accustomed to the sound of a railway whistle which Ben always carries in his pocket, whose

instructions were, so soon as he should hear the whistle blown, to dash into the kitchen, seize the hot plum-pudding and mince-pies, and speed with them to Watts's Charity, where they would be received (he was further instructed) by the sauce-female, who would be provided with brandy in a blue state of combustion.

All these arrangements were executed in the most exact and punctual manner. I never saw a finer turkey, finer beef, or greater prodigality of sauce and gravy; and my travellers did wonderful justice to everything set before them. It made my heart rejoice to observe how their wind-and-frost-hardened faces softened in the clatter of plates and knives and forks, and mellowed in the fire and supper heat. While their hats and caps and wrappers, hanging up, a few small bundles on the ground in a corner, and in another corner three or four old walking-sticks, worn down at the end to mere fringe, linked this snug interior with the bleak outside in a golden chain.

When supper was done, and my brown beauty had been elevated on the table, there was a general requisition to me to "take the corner"; which suggested to me comfortably enough how much my friends here made of a fire—for when had *I* ever thought so highly of the corner, since the days when I connected it with Jack Horner? However, as I declined, Ben, whose touch on all convivial instruments is perfect, drew the table apart, and instructing my travellers to open right and left on either side of me, and form round the fire, closed up the centre with myself and my chair, and preserved the order we had kept at table. He had already, in

a tranquil manner, boxed the ears of the inattentive boys until they had been by imperceptible degrees boxed out of the room ; and he now rapidly skirmished the sauce-female into the High Street, disappeared, and softly closed the door.

This was the time for bringing the poker to bear on the billet of wood. I tapped it three times, like an enchanted talisman, and a brilliant host of merry-makers burst out of it, and sported off by the chimney—rushing up the middle in a fiery country-dance, and never coming down again. Meanwhile, by their sparkling light, which threw our lamp into the shade, I filled the glasses, and gave my travellers, CHRISTMAS !—CHRISTMAS EVE, my friends, when the shepherds, who were poor travellers too, in their way, heard the angels sing, “On earth, peace. Good-will towards men !”

I don't know who was the first among us to think that we ought to take hands as we sat, in deference to the toast, or whether any one of us anticipated the others, but at any rate we all did it. We then drank to the memory of the good Master Richard Watts. And I wish his ghost may never have had worse usage under that roof than it had from us.

It was the witching time for story-telling. “Our whole life, travellers,” said I, “is a story more or less intelligible—generally less ; but we shall read it by a clearer light when it is ended. I, for one, am so divided this night between fact and fiction, that I scarce know which is which. Shall I beguile the time by telling you a story as we sit here ?”

They all answered, yes. I had little to tell them, but I was bound by my own proposal. Therefore,

after looking for awhile at the spiral column of smoke wreathing up from my brown beauty, through which I could have almost sworn I saw the effigy of Master Richard Watts less startled than usual, I fired away.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF RICHARD DOUBLEDICK.

IN the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, a relative of mine came limping down, on foot, to this town of Chatham. I call it this town, because if anybody present knows to a nicety where Rochester ends and Chatham begins, it is more than I do. He was a poor traveller, with not a farthing in his pocket. He sat by the fire in this very room, and he slept one night in a bed that will be occupied to-night by some one here.

My relative came down to Chatham to enlist in a cavalry regiment, if a cavalry regiment would have him; if not, to take King George's shilling from any corporal or sergeant who would put a bunch of ribbons in his hat. His object was to get shot; but he thought he might as well ride to death as be at the trouble of walking.

My relative's Christian name was Richard, but he was better known as Dick. He dropped his own surname on the road down, and took up that of Doubledick. He was passed as Richard Doubledick; age, twenty-two; height, five foot ten; native place, Exmouth, which he had never been near in his life. There was no cavalry in Chatham when he limped

over the bridge here with half a shoe to his dusty feet, so he enlisted into a regiment of the line, and was glad to get drunk and forget all about it.

You are to know that this relative of mine had gone wrong, and run wild. His heart was in the right place, but it was sealed up. He had been betrothed to a good and beautiful girl, whom he had loved better than she—or perhaps even he—believed; but in an evil hour he had given her cause to say to him solemnly, “Richard, I will never marry another man. I will live single for your sake, but Mary Marshall’s lips”—her name was Mary Marshall—“never address another word to you on earth. Go, Richard! Heaven forgive you!” This finished him. This brought him down to Chatham. This made him Private Richard Doubledick, with a determination to be shot.

There was not a more dissipated and reckless soldier in Chatham barracks, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, than Private Richard Doubledick. He associated with the dregs of every regiment; he was as seldom sober as he could be, and was constantly under punishment. It became clear to the whole barracks that Private Richard Doubledick would very soon be flogged.

Now, the captain of Richard Doubledick’s company was a young gentleman not above five years his senior, whose eyes had an expression in them which affected Private Richard Doubledick in a very remarkable way. They were bright, handsome, dark eyes—what are called laughing eyes generally, and, when serious, rather steady than severe—but they were the only eyes now left in his narrowed world that

Private Richard Doubledick could not stand. Unabashed by evil report and punishment, defiant of everything else and everybody else, he had but to know that those eyes looked at him for a moment, and he felt ashamed. He could not so much as salute Captain Taunton in the street like any other officer. He was reproached and confused—troubled by the mere possibility of the captain's looking at him. In his worst moments, he would rather turn back, and go any distance out of his way, than encounter those two handsome, dark, bright eyes.

One day, when Private Richard Doubledick came out of the black hole, where he had been passing the last eight-and-forty hours, and in which retreat he spent a good deal of his time, he was ordered to betake himself to Captain Taunton's quarters. In the stale and squalid state of a man just out of the black hole, he had less fancy than ever for being seen by the captain; but he was not so mad yet as to disobey orders, and consequently went up to the terrace overlooking the parade-ground, where the officers' quarters were; twisting and breaking in his hands, as he went along, a bit of the straw that had formed the decorative furniture of the black hole.

"Come in!" cried the captain, when he knocked with his knuckles at the door. Private Richard Doubledick pulled off his cap, took a stride forward, and felt very conscious that he stood in the light of the dark, bright eyes.

There was a silent pause. Private Richard Doubledick had put the straw in his mouth, and was gradually doubling it up into his windpipe and choking himself.

"Doubledick," said the captain, "do you know where you are going to?"

"To the devil, sir?" faltered Doubledick.

"Yes," returned the captain. "And very fast."

Private Richard Doubledick turned the straw of the black hole in his mouth, and made a miserable salute of acquiescence.

"Doubledick," said the captain, "since I entered his Majesty's service, a boy of seventeen, I have been pained to see many men of promise going that road; but I have never been so pained to see a man determined to make the shameful journey as I have been, ever since you joined the regiment, to see you."

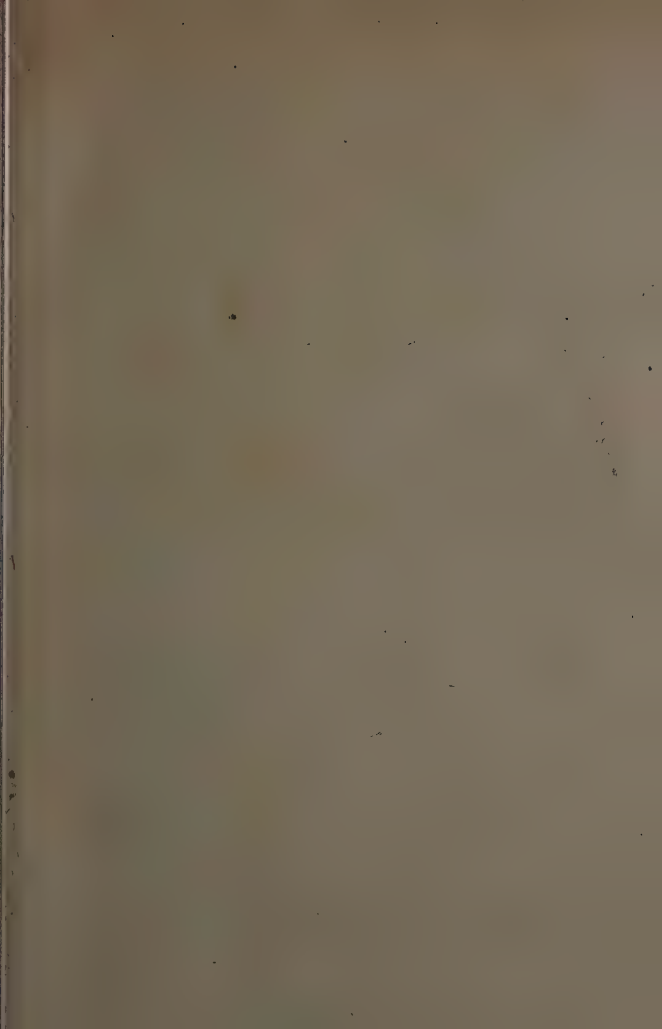
Private Richard Doubledick began to find a film stealing over the floor at which he looked; also to find the legs of the captain's breakfast-table turning crooked, as if he saw them through water.

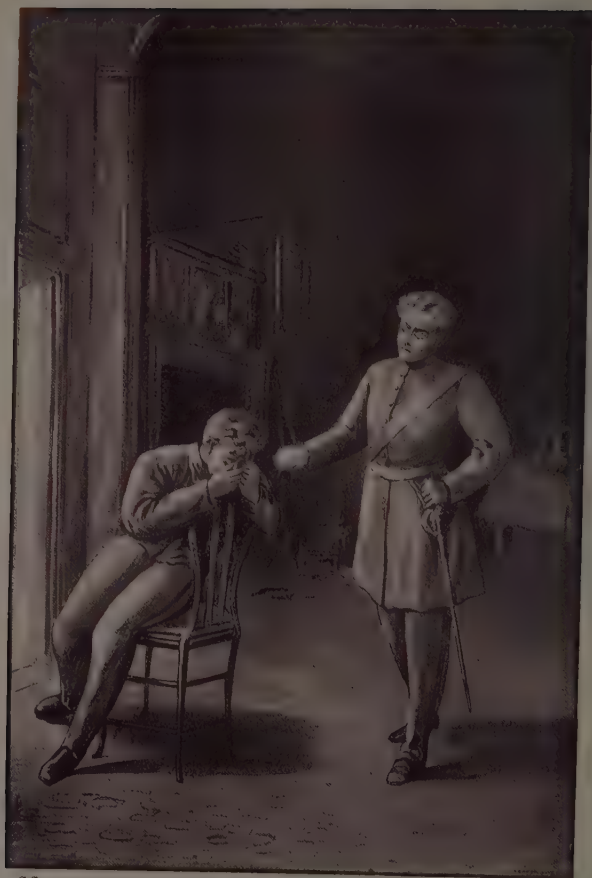
"I am only a common soldier, sir," said he. "It signifies very little what such a poor brute comes to."

"You are a man," returned the captain, with grave indignation, "of education and superior advantages; and if you say that, meaning what you say, you have sunk lower than I had believed. How low that must be, I leave you to consider, knowing what I know of your disgrace, and seeing what I see."

"I hope to get shot soon, sir," said Private Richard Doubledick, "and then the regiment and the world together will be rid of me."

The legs of the table were becoming very crooked. Doubledick, looking up to steady his vision, met the eyes that had so strong an influence over him. He put his hand before his own eyes, and the breast of his disgrace-jacket swelled as if it would fly asunder.





"I would rather," said the young captain, "see this in you, Doubledick, than I would see five thousand guineas counted out upon this table for a gift to my good mother. Have you a mother?"

"I am thankful to say she is dead, sir."

"If your praises," returned the captain, "were sounded from mouth to mouth through the whole regiment, through the whole army, through the whole country, you would wish she had lived to say, with pride and joy, 'He is my son!'"

"Spare me, sir," said Doubledick. "She would never have heard any good of me. She would never have had any pride and joy in owning herself my mother. Love and compassion she might have had, and would have always had, I know; but not—— Spare me, sir! I am a broken wretch, quite at your mercy!" And he turned his face to the wall, and stretched out his imploring hand.

"My friend——" began the captain.

"God bless you, sir!" sobbed Private Richard Doubledick.

"You are at the crisis of your fate. Hold your course unchanged a little longer, and you know what must happen. I know even better than you can imagine, that, after that has happened, you are lost. No man who could shed those tears could bear those marks."

"I fully believe it, sir," in a low, shivering voice, said Private Richard Doubledick.

"But a man in any station can do his duty," said the young captain, "and, in doing it, can earn his own respect, even if his case should be so very unfortunate and so very rare that he can earn no other

man's. A common soldier, poor brute though you called him just now, has this advantage in the stormy times we live in, that he always does his duty before a host of sympathising witnesses. Do you doubt that he may so do it as to be extolled through a whole regiment, through a whole army, through a whole country? Turn while you may yet retrieve the past, and try."

"I will! I ask for only one witness, sir," cried Richard, with a bursting heart.

"I understand you. I will be a watchful and a faithful one."

I have heard from Private Richard Doubledick's own lips, that he dropped down upon his knee, kissed that officer's hand, arose, and went out of the light of the dark, bright eyes, an altered man.

In that year, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, the French were in Egypt, in Italy, in Germany, where not? Napoleon Bonaparte had likewise begun to stir against us in India, and most men could read the signs of the great troubles that were coming on. In the very next year, when we formed an alliance with Austria against him, Captain Taunton's regiment was on service in India. And there was not a finer non-commissioned officer in it—no, nor in the whole line—than Corporal Richard Doubledick.

In eighteen hundred and one, the Indian army were on the coast of Egypt. Next year was the year of the proclamation of the short peace, and they were recalled. It had then become well known to thousands of men, that wherever Captain Taunton, with the dark, bright eyes, led, there, close to him,

ever at his side, firm as a rock, true as the sun, and brave as Mars, would be certain to be found, while life beat in their hearts, that famous soldier, Sergeant Richard Doubledick.

Eighteen hundred and five, besides being the great year of Trafalgar, was a year of hard fighting in India. That year saw such wonders done by a sergeant-major, who cut his way single-handed through a solid mass of men, recovered the colours of his regiment, which had been seized from the hand of a poor boy shot through the heart, and rescued his wounded captain, who was down, and in a very jungle of horses' hoofs and sabres—saw such wonders done, I say, by this brave sergeant-major, that he was specially made the bearer of the colours he had won; and Ensign Richard Doubledick had risen from the ranks.

Sorely cut up in every battle, but always reinforced by the bravest of men—for the fame of following the old colours, shot through and through, which Ensign Richard Doubledick had saved, inspired all breasts—this regiment fought its way through the Peninsular war, up to the investment of Badajoz in eighteen hundred and twelve. Again and again it had been cheered through the British ranks until the tears had sprung into men's eyes at the mere hearing of the mighty British voice, so exultant in their valour; and there was not a drummer-boy but knew the legend, that wherever the two friends, Major Taunton, with the dark, bright eyes, and Ensign Richard Doubledick, who was devoted to him, were seen to go, there the boldest spirits in the English army became wild to follow.

One day, at Badajos—not in the great storming, but in repelling a hot sally of the besieged upon our men at work in the trenches, who had given way—the two officers found themselves hurrying forward, face to face, against a party of French infantry, who made a stand. There was an officer at their head, encouraging his men—a courageous, handsome, gallant officer of five-and-thirty, whom Doubledick saw hurriedly, almost momentarily, but saw well. He particularly noticed this officer waving his sword, and rallying his men with an eager and excited cry, when they fired in obedience to his gesture, and Major Taunton dropped.

It was over in ten minutes more, and Doubledick returned to the spot where he had laid the best friend man ever had on a coat spread upon the wet clay. Major Taunton's uniform was opened at the breast, and on his shirt were three little spots of blood.

"Dear Doubledick," said he, "I am dying."

"For the love of Heaven, no!" exclaimed the other, kneeling down beside him, and passing his arm round his neck to raise his head. "Taunton! My preserver, my guardian angel, my witness! Dearest, truest, kindest of human beings! Taunton! For God's sake!"

The bright, dark eyes—so very, very dark now, in the pale face—smiled upon him; and the hand he had kissed thirteen years ago laid itself fondly on his breast.

"Write to my mother. You will see home again. Tell her how we became friends. It will comfort her, as it comforts me."

He spoke no more, but faintly signed for a moment

towards his hair as it fluttered in the wind. The ensign understood him. He smiled again when he saw that, and, gently turning his face over on the supporting arm as if for rest, died, with his hand upon the breast in which he had revived a soul.

No dry eye looked on Ensign Richard Doubledick that melancholy day. He buried his friend on the field, and became a lone, bereaved man. Beyond his duty he appeared to have but two remaining cares in life—one, to preserve the little packet of hair he was to give to Taunton's mother ; the other, to encounter that French officer who had rallied the men under whose fire Taunton fell. A new legend now began to circulate among our troops ; and it was, that when he and the French officer came face to face once more, there would be weeping in France.

The war went on—and through it went the exact picture of the French officer on the one side, and the bodily reality upon the other—until the Battle of Toulouse was fought. In the returns sent home appeared these words: "Severely wounded, but not dangerously, Lieutenant Richard Doubledick."

At midsummer time, in the year eighteen hundred and fourteen, Lieutenant Richard Doubledick, now a browned soldier, seven-and-thirty years of age, came home to England invalided. He brought the hair with him, near his heart. Many a French officer had he seen since that day ; many a dreadful night, in searching with men and lanterns for his wounded, had he relieved French officers lying disabled ; but the mental picture and the reality had never come together.

Though he was weak and suffered pain, he lost not

an hour in getting down to Frome, in Somersetshire, where Taunton's mother lived. In the sweet, compassionate words that naturally present themselves to the mind to-night, "he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

It was a Sunday evening, and the lady sat at her quiet garden-window, reading the Bible; reading to herself, in a trembling voice, that very passage in it, as I have heard him tell. He heard the words: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!"

He had to pass the window; and the bright, dark eyes of his debased time seemed to look at him. Her heart told her who he was; she came to the door quickly, and fell upon his neck.

"He saved me from ruin, made me a human creature, won me from infamy and shame. O God, for ever bless him! As He will, He will!"

"He will!" the lady answered. "I know he is in heaven!" Then she piteously cried, "But, oh, my darling boy, my darling boy!"

Never from the hour when Private Richard Double-dick enlisted at Chatham had the private, corporal, sergeant, sergeant-major, ensign, or lieutenant breathed his right name, or the name of Mary Marshall, or a word of the story of his life, into any ear except his reclainer's. That previous scene in his existence was closed. He had firmly resolved that his expiation should be to live unknown; to disturb no more the peace that had long grown over his old offences; to let it be revealed, when he was dead, that he had striven and suffered, and had never forgotten; and then, if they could forgive him and believe him—well, it would be time enough—time enough!

But that night, remembering the words he had cherished for two years, "Tell her how we became friends. It will comfort her, as it comforts me," he related everything. It gradually seemed to him as if in his maturity he had recovered a mother; it gradually seemed to her as if in her bereavement she had found a son. During his stay in England, the quiet garden into which he had slowly and painfully crept, a stranger, became the boundary of his home; when he was able to rejoin his regiment in the spring, he left the garden, thinking was this indeed the first time he had ever turned his face towards the old colours with a woman's blessing!

He followed them—so ragged, so scarred and pierced now, that they would scarcely hold together—to Quatre Bras and Ligny. He stood beside them, in an awful stillness of many men, shadowy through the mist and drizzle of a wet June forenoon, on the field of Waterloo. And down to that hour the picture in his mind of the French officer had never been compared with the reality.

The famous regiment was in action early in the battle, and received its first check in many an eventful year, when he was seen to fall. But it swept on to avenge him, and left behind it no such creature in the world of consciousness as Lieutenant Richard Doubledick.

Through pits of mire, and pools of rain; along deep ditches, once roads, that were pounded and ploughed to pieces by artillery, heavy wagons, tramp of men and horses, and the struggle of every wheeled thing that could carry wounded soldiers; jolted among the dying and the dead, so disfigured by

blood and mud as to be hardly recognisable for humanity; undisturbed by the moaning of men and the shrieking of horses, which, newly taken from the peaceful pursuits of life, could not endure the sight of the stragglers lying by the wayside, never to resume their toilsome journey; dead, as to any sentient life that was in it, and yet alive—the form that had been Lieutenant Richard Doubledick, with whose praises England rang, was conveyed to Brussels. There it was tenderly laid down in hospital; and there it lay, week after week, through the long bright summer days, until the harvest, spared by war, had ripened and was gathered in.

Over and over again the sun rose and set upon the crowded city; over and over again the moonlight nights were quiet on the plains of Waterloo: and all that time was a blank to what had been Lieutenant Richard Doubledick. Rejoicing troops marched into Brussels, and marched out; brothers and fathers, sisters, mothers, and wives, came thronging thither, drew their lots of joy or agony, and departed; so many times a day the bells rang; so many times the shadows of the great buildings changed; so many lights sprang up at dusk; so many feet passed here and there upon the pavements; so many hours of sleep and cooler air of night succeeded: indifferent to all, a marble face lay on a bed, like the face of a recumbent statue on the tomb of Lieutenant Richard Doubledick.

Slowly labouring, at last, through a long, heavy dream of confused time and place, presenting faint glimpses of army surgeons whom he knew, and of faces that had been familiar to his youth—dearest

and kindest among them, Mary Marshall's, with a solicitude upon it more like reality than anything he could discern—Lieutenant Richard Doubledick came back to life. To the beautiful life of a calm autumn evening sunset, to the peaceful life of a fresh quiet room with a large window standing open; a balcony beyond, in which were moving leaves and sweet-smelling flowers; beyond, again, the clear sky, with the sun full in his sight, pouring its golden radiance on his bed.

It was so tranquil and so lovely that he thought he had passed into another world. And he said in a faint voice, "Taunton, are you near me?"

A face bent over him. Not his, his mother's.

"I came to nurse you. We have nursed you many weeks. You were moved here long ago. Do you remember nothing?"

"Nothing."

The lady kissed his cheek, and held his hand, soothing him.

"Where is the regiment? What has happened? Let me call you mother. What has happened, mother?"

"A great victory, dear. The war is over, and the regiment was the bravest in the field."

His eyes kindled, his lips trembled, he sobbed, and the tears ran down his face. He was very weak, too weak to move his hand.

"Was it dark just now?" he asked presently.

"No."

"It was only dark to me? Something passed away, like a black shadow. But as it went, and the sun—oh, the blessed sun, how beautiful it is!—touched

blood and mud as to be hardly recognisable for humanity ; undisturbed by the moaning of men and the shrieking of horses, which, newly taken from the peaceful pursuits of life, could not endure the sight of the stragglers lying by the wayside, never to resume their toilsome journey ; dead, as to any sentient life that was in it, and yet alive—the form that had been Lieutenant Richard Doubledick, with whose praises England rang, was conveyed to Brussels. There it was tenderly laid down in hospital ; and there it lay, week after week, through the long bright summer days, until the harvest, spared by war, had ripened and was gathered in.

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gratitude. His parting words were fulfilled. I see home again !”

Well ! They were happy. It was a long recovery, but they were happy through it all. The snow had melted on the ground, and the birds were singing in the leafless thickets of the early spring, when those three were first able to ride out together, and when people flocked about the open carriage to cheer and congratulate Captain Richard Doubledick.

But even then it became necessary for the captain, instead of returning to England, to complete his recovery in the climate of southern France. They found a spot upon the Rhone, within a ride of the old town of Avignon, and within view of its broken bridge, which was all they could desire ; they lived there, together, six months ; then returned to England. Mrs. Taunton, growing old after three years—though not so old as that her bright, dark eyes were dimmed—and remembering that her strength had been benefited by the change, resolved to go back for a year to those parts. So she went with a faithful servant, who had often carried her son in his arms ; and she was to be rejoined and escorted home, at the year’s end, by Captain Richard Doubledick.

She wrote regularly to her children (as she called them now), and they to her. She went to the neighbourhood of Aix ; and there, in their own château near the farmer’s house she rented, she grew into intimacy with a family belonging to that part of France. The intimacy began in her often meeting among the vineyards a pretty child, a girl with a most compassionate heart, who was never tired of listening to the solitary English lady’s stories of her

poor son and the cruel wars. The family were as gentle as the child, and at length she came to know them so well that she accepted their invitation to pass the last month of her residence abroad under their roof. All this intelligence she wrote home, piecemeal, as it came about, from time to time; and at last inclosed a polite note, from the head of the château, soliciting, on the occasion of his approaching mission to that neighbourhood, the honour of the company of *cet homme si justement célèbre*, Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Doubledick.

Captain Doubledick, now a hardy, handsome man in the full vigour of life, broader across the chest and shoulders than he had ever been before, despatched a courteous reply, and followed it in person. Travelling through all that extent of country after three years of peace, he blessed the better days on which the world had fallen. The corn was golden, not drenched in unnatural red; was bound in sheaves for food, not trodden underfoot by men in mortal fight. The smoke rose up from peaceful hearths, not blazing ruins. The carts were laden with the fair fruits of the earth, not with wounds and death. To him who had so often seen the terrible reverse, these things were beautiful indeed; and they brought him in a softened spirit to the old château near Aix upon a deep blue evening.

It was a large château of the genuine old ghostly kind, with round towers, and extinguishers, and a high leaden roof, and more windows than Aladdin's palace. The lattice blinds were all thrown open after the heat of the day, and there were glimpses of rambling walls and corridors within. Then there were immense out-buildings fallen into partial decay,

masses of dark trees, terrace-gardens, balustrades; tanks of water, too weak to play and too dirty to work; statues, weeds, and thickets of iron railing that seemed to have overgrown themselves like the shrubberies, and to have branched out in all manner of wild shapes. The entrance doors stood open, as doors often do in that country when the heat of the day is past; and the captain saw no bell or knocker, and walked in.

He walked into a lofty stone hall, refreshingly cool and gloomy after the glare of a southern day's travel. Extending along the four sides of this hall was a gallery, leading to suites of rooms; and it was lighted from the top. Still no bell was to be seen.

"Faith," said the captain halting, ashamed of the clanking of his boots, "this is a ghostly beginning!"

He started back, and felt his face turn white. In the gallery, looking down at him, stood the French officer—the officer whose picture he had carried in his mind so long and so far. Compared with the original, at last—in every lineament how like it was!

He moved, and disappeared, and Captain Richard Doubledick heard his steps coming quickly down into the hall. He entered through an archway. There was a bright, sudden look upon his face, much such a look as it had worn in that fatal moment.

Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Doubledick? Enchanted to receive him! A thousand apologies! The servants were all out in the air. There was a little fête among them in the garden. In effect, it was the fête day of my daughter, the little cherished and protected of Madame Taunton.

He was so gracious and so frank that Monsieur le

Capitaine Richard Doubledick could not withhold his hand. "It is the hand of a brave Englishman," said the French officer, retaining it while he spoke. "I could respect a brave Englishman, even as my foe, how much more as my friend! I also am a soldier."

"He has not remembered me, as I have remembered him; he did not take such note of my face, that day, as I took of his," thought Captain Richard Doubledick. "How shall I tell him?"

The French officer conducted his guest into a garden and presented him to his wife, an engaging and beautiful woman, sitting with Mrs. Taunton in a whimsical old-fashioned pavilion. His daughter, her fair young face beaming with joy, came running to embrace him; and there was a boy-baby to tumble down among the orange trees on the broad steps, in making for his father's legs. A multitude of children visitors were dancing to sprightly music; and all the servants and peasants about the château were dancing too. It was a scene of innocent happiness that might have been invented for the climax of the scenes of peace which had soothed the captain's journey.

He looked on, greatly troubled in his mind, until a resounding bell rang, and the French officer begged to show him his rooms. They went upstairs into the gallery from which the officer had looked down; and Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Doubledick was cordially welcomed to a grand outer chamber, and a smaller one within, all clocks and draperies, and hearths, and brazen dogs and tiles, and cool devices, and elegance, and vastness.

"You were at Waterloo," said the French officer.

"I was," said Captain Richard Doubledick. "And at Badajos."

Left alone with the sound of his own stern voice in his ears, he sat down to consider, What shall I do, and how shall I tell him? At that time, unhappily, many deplorable duels had been fought between English and French officers, arising out of the recent war; and these duels, and how to avoid this officer's hospitality, were the uppermost thoughts in Captain Richard Doubledick's mind.

He was thinking, and letting the time run out in which he should have dressed for dinner, when Mrs. Taunton spoke to him outside the door, asking if he could give her the letter he had brought from Mary. "His mother, above all," the captain thought. "How shall I tell *her*?"

"You will form a friendship with your host, I hope," said Mrs. Taunton, whom he hurriedly admitted, "that will last for life. He is so true-hearted and so generous, Richard, that you can hardly fail to esteem one another. If he had been spared," she kissed (not without tears) the locket in which she wore his hair, "he would have appreciated him with his own magnanimity, and would have been truly happy that the evil days were past which made such a man his enemy."

She left the room; and the captain walked, first to one window, whence he could see the dancing in the garden, then to another window, whence he could see the smiling prospect and the peaceful vineyards.

"Spirit of my departed friend," said he, "is it through thee these better thoughts are rising in

my mind? Is it thou who hast shown me, all the way I have been drawn to meet this man, the blessings of the altered time? Is it thou who hast sent thy stricken mother to me, to stay my angry hand? Is it from thee the whisper comes, that this man did his duty as thou didst—and as I did, through thy guidance, which has wholly saved me here on earth—and that he did no more?"

He sat down, with his head buried in his hands, and, when he rose up, made the second strong resolution of his life—that neither to the French officer, nor to the mother of his departed friend, nor to any soul, while either of the two was living, would he breathe what only he knew. And when he touched that French officer's glass with his own, that day at dinner, he secretly forgave him in the name of the Divine Forgiver of injuries.

Here I ended my story as the first poor traveller. But, if I had told it now, I could have added that the time has since come when the son of Major Richard Doubledick, and the son of that French officer, friends as their fathers were before them, fought side by side in one cause, with their respective nations, like long-divided brothers whom the better times have brought together, fast united.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROAD.

My story being finished, and the wassail too, we broke up as the cathedral bell struck twelve. I did not take leave of my travellers that night ; for it had come into my head to reappear, in conjunction with some hot coffee, at seven in the morning.

As I passed along the High Street, I heard the waits at a distance, and struck off to find them. They were playing near one of the old gates of the city, at the corner of a wonderfully quaint row of red-brick tenements, which the clarionet obligingly informed me were inhabited by the minor canons. They had odd little porches over the doors, like sounding-boards over old pulpits ; and I thought I should like to see one of the minor canons come out upon his top step, and favour us with a little Christmas discourse about the poor scholars of Rochester ; taking for his text the words of his Master relative to the devouring of widows' houses.

The clarionet was so communicative, and my inclinations were (as they generally are) of so vagabond a tendency, that I accompanied the waits across an open green called the Vines, and assisted—in the French sense—at the performance of two waltzes, two polkas, and three Irish melodies, before I thought of my inn any more. However, I returned to it then, and found a fiddle in the kitchen, and Ben, the wall-eyed young man, and two chambermaids, circling round the great deal table with the utmost animation.

I had a very bad night. It cannot have been owing to the turkey or the beef—and the wassail is out of the question—but in every endeavour that I made to get to sleep I failed most dismally. I was never asleep; and in whatsoever unreasonable direction my mind rambled, the effigy of Master Richard Watts perpetually embarrassed it.

In a word, I only got out of the Worshipful Master Richard Watts's way by getting out of bed in the dark at six o'clock, and tumbling, as my custom is, into all the cold water that could be accumulated for the purpose. The outer air was dull and cold enough in the street, when I came down there; and the one candle in our supper-room at Watts's Charity looked as pale in the burning as if it had had a bad night too. But my travellers had all slept soundly, and they took to the hot coffee, and the piles of bread-and-butter, which Ben had arranged like deals in a timber-yard, as kindly as I could desire.

While it was yet scarcely daylight, we all came out into the street together, and there shook hands. The widow took the little sailor towards Chatham, where he was to find a steamboat for Sheerness; the lawyer, with an extremely knowing look, went his own way, without committing himself by announcing his intentions; two more struck off by the cathedral and old castle for Maidstone; and the book-pedlar accompanied me over the bridge. As for me, I was going to walk by Cobham Woods, as far upon my way to London as I fancied.

When I came to the stile and footpath by which I was to diverge from the main road, I bade farewell to my last remaining poor traveller, and pursued my

way alone. And now the mists began to rise in the most beautiful manner, and the sun to shine ; and as I went on through the bracing air, seeing the hoarfrost sparkle everywhere, I felt as if all nature shared in the joy of the great Birthday.

Going through the woods, the softness of my tread upon the mossy ground and among the brown leaves enhanced the Christmas sacredness by which I felt surrounded. As the whitened stems environed me, I thought how the Founder of the time had never raised His benignant hand, save to bless and heal, except in the case of one unconscious tree. By Cobham Hall, I came to the village, and the churchyard where the dead had been quietly buried, "in the sure and certain hope" which Christmas-time inspired. What children could I see at play, and not be loving of, recalling who had loved them ! No garden that I passed was out of unison with the day, for I remembered that the tomb was in a garden, and that "she, supposing Him to be the gardener," had said, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." In time, the distant river with the ships came full in view, and with it pictures of the poor fishermen, mending their nets, who arose and followed Him—of the teaching of the people from a ship pushed off a little way from shore, by reason of the multitude—of a majestic figure walking on the water, in the loneliness of night. My very shadow on the ground was eloquent of Christmas ; for did not the people lay their sick where the mere shadows of the men who had heard and seen Him might fall as they passed along ?

Thus Christmas begirt me, far and near, until I had come to Blackheath, and had walked down the long vista of gnarled old trees in Greenwich Park, and was being steam-rattled through the mists now closing in once more, towards the lights of London. Brightly they shone, but not so brightly as my own fire, and the brighter faces around it, when we came together to celebrate the day. And there I told of worthy Master Richard Watts, and of my supper with the six poor travellers who were neither rogues nor proctors, and from that hour to this I have never seen one of them again.

The Holly-Tree.

Three Branches.

The Holly-Tree.

Three Branches.

FIRST BRANCH.

MYSELF.

I HAVE kept one secret in the course of my life. I am a bashful man. Nobody would suppose it, nobody ever does suppose it, nobody ever did suppose it, but I am naturally a bashful man. This is the secret which I have never breathed until now.

I might greatly move the reader by some account of the innumerable places I have not been to, the innumerable people I have not called upon or received, the innumerable social evasions I have been guilty of solely because I am by original constitution and character a bashful man. But I will leave the reader unmoved, and proceed with the object before me.

That object is to give a plain account of my travels and discoveries in the Holly-Tree Inn; in which place of good entertainment for man and beast I was once snowed up.

It happened in the memorable year when I parted for ever from Angela Leath, whom I was shortly to have married, on making the discovery that she preferred my bosom friend. From our school-days I had freely admitted Edwin, in my own mind, to be far superior to myself; and, though I was grievously wounded at heart, I felt the preference to be natural, and tried to forgive them both. It was under these

circumstances that I resolved to go to America—on my way to the devil.

Communicating my discovery neither to Angela nor to Edwin, but resolving to write each of them an affecting letter conveying my blessing and forgiveness, which the steam-tender for shore should carry to the post when I myself should be bound for the New World, far beyond recall—I say, locking up my grief in my own breast, and consoling myself as I could with the prospect of being generous, I quietly left all I held dear, and started on the desolate journey I have mentioned.

The dead winter-time was in full dreariness when I left my chambers for ever, at five o'clock in the morning. I had shaved by candle-light, of course, and was miserably cold, and experienced that general all-pervading sensation of getting up to be hanged which I have usually found inseparable from untimely rising under such circumstances.

How well I remember the forlorn aspect of Fleet Street when I came out of the Temple! The street-lamps flickering in the gusty north-east wind, as if the very gas were contorted with cold; the white-topped houses; the bleak, star-lighted sky; the market people and other early stragglers, trotting to circulate their almost frozen blood; the hospitable light and warmth of the few coffee-shops and public-houses that were open for such customers; the hard, dry, frosty rime with which the air was charged (the wind had already beaten it into every crevice), and which lashed my face like a steel whip.

It wanted nine days to the end of the month, and end of the year. The post-office packet for the

United States was to depart from Liverpool, weather permitting, on the first of the ensuing month, and I had the intervening time on my hands. I had taken this into consideration, and had resolved to make a visit to a certain spot (which I need not name) on the farther borders of Yorkshire. It was endeared to me by my having first seen Angela at a farm-house in that place, and my melancholy was gratified by the idea of taking a wintry leave of it before my expatriation. I ought to explain that, to avoid being sought out before my resolution should have been rendered irrevocable by being carried into full effect, I had written to Angela overnight, in my usual manner, lamenting that urgent business, of which she should know all particulars by and by—took me unexpectedly away from her for a week or ten days.

There was no Northern Railway at that time, and in its place there were stage-coaches; which I occasionally find myself, in common with some other people, affecting to lament now, but which everybody dreaded as a very serious penance then. I had secured the box-seat on the fastest of these, and my business in Fleet Street was to get into a cab with my portmanteau, so to make the best of my way to the Peacock at Islington, where I was to join this coach. But when one of our Temple watchmen, who carried my portmanteau into Fleet Street for me, told me about the huge blocks of ice that had for some days past been floating in the river, having closed up in the night, and made a walk from the Temple Gardens over to the Surrey shore, I began to ask myself the question, whether the box-seat would not be likely to put a sudden and a frosty end to my unhappiness.

I was heart-broken, it is true, and yet I was not quite so far gone as to wish to be frozen to death.

When I got up to the Peacock—where I found everybody drinking hot purl, in self-preservation—I asked if there were an inside seat to spare. I then discovered that, inside or out, I was the only passenger. This gave me a still livelier idea of the great inclemency of the weather, since that coach always loaded particularly well. However, I took a little purl (which I found uncommonly good), and got into the coach. When I was seated, they built me up with straw to the waist, and, conscious of making a rather ridiculous appearance, I began my journey.

It was still dark when we left the Peacock. For a little while, pale, uncertain ghosts of houses and trees appeared and vanished, and then it was hard, black, frozen day. People were lighting their fires; smoke was mounting straight up high into the rarefied air; and we were rattling for Highgate Archway over the hardest ground I have ever heard the ring of iron shoes on. As we got into the country, everything seemed to have grown old and gray. The roads, the trees, thatched roofs of cottages and homesteads, the ricks, in farmers' yards. Out-door work was abandoned, horse-troughs at roadside inns were frozen hard, no stragglers lounged about, doors were close shut, little turnpike houses had blazing fires inside, and children (even turnpike people have children, and seem to like them) rubbed the frost from the little panes of glass with their chubby arms, that their bright eyes might catch a glimpse of the solitary coach going by. I don't know when the snow began to set in; but I know that we

were changing horses somewhere when I heard the guard remark, "That the old lady up in the sky was picking her geese pretty hard to-day." Then, indeed, I found the white down falling fast and thick.

The lonely day wore on, and I dozed it out, as a lonely traveller does. I was warm and valiant after eating and drinking—particularly after dinner; cold and depressed at all other times. I was always bewildered as to time and place, and always more or less out of my senses. The coach and horses seemed to execute in chorus *Auld Lang Syne*, without a moment's intermission. They kept the time and tune with the greatest regularity, and rose into the swell at the beginning of the refrain, with a precision that worried me to death. While we changed horses, the guard and coachman went stumping up and down the road, printing off their shoes in the snow, and poured so much liquid consolation into themselves without being any the worse for it, that I began to confound them, as it darkened again, with two great white casks standing on end. Our horses tumbled down in solitary places, and we got them up—which was the pleasantest variety *I* had, for it warmed me. And it snowed and snowed, and still it snowed, and never left off snowing. All night long we went on in this manner. Thus we came round the clock, upon the Great North Road, to the performance of *Auld Lang Syne* by day again. And it snowed and snowed, and still it snowed, and never left off snowing.

I forget now where we were at noon on the second day, and where we ought to have been; but I know that we were scores of miles behindhand, and that

our case was growing worse every hour. The drift was becoming prodigiously deep; landmarks were getting snowed out; the road and the fields were all one; instead of having fences and hedgerows to guide us, we went crunching on over an unbroken surface of ghastly white that might sink beneath us at any moment and drop us down a whole hill-side. Still the coachman and guard—who kept together on the box, always in council, and looking well about them—made out the track with astonishing sagacity.

When we came in sight of a town, it looked, to my fancy, like a large drawing on a slate, with abundance of slate-pencil expended on the churches and houses where the snow lay thickest. When we came within a town, and found the church clocks all stopped, the dial-faces choked with snow, and the inn-signs blotted out, it seemed as if the whole place were overgrown with white moss. As to the coach, it was a mere snowball; similarly, the men and boys who ran along beside us to the town's end, turning our clogged wheels and encouraging our horses, were men and boys of snow; and the bleak wild solitude to which they at last dismissed us was a snowy Sahara. One would have thought this enough: notwithstanding which, I pledge my word that it snowed and snowed, and still it snowed, and never left off snowing.

We performed *Auld Lang Syne* the whole day; seeing nothing, out of towns and villages, but the track of stoats, hares, and foxes, and sometimes of birds. At nine o'clock at night, on a Yorkshire moor, a cheerful burst from our horn, and a welcome sound of talking, with a glimmering and moving

about of lanterns, roused me from my drowsy state. I found that we were going to change.

They helped me out, and I said to a waiter, whose bare head became as white as King Lear's in a single minute, "What inn is this?"

"The Holly-Tree, sir," said he.

"Upon my word, I believe," said I, apologetically, to the guard and coachman, "that I must stop here."

Now the landlord, and the landlady, and the ostler, and the postboy, and all the stable authorities, had already asked the coachman, to the wide-eyed interest of all the rest of the establishment, if he meant to go on. The coachman had already replied, "Yes, he'd take her through it"—meaning by her the coach—"if so be as George would stand by him." George was the guard, and he had already sworn that he *would* stand by him. So the helpers were already getting the horses out.

My declaring myself beaten, after this parley, was not an announcement without preparation. Indeed, but for the way to the announcement being smoothed by the parley, I more than doubt whether, as an innately bashful man, I should have had the confidence to make it. As it was, it received the approval even of the guard and coachman. Therefore, with many confirmations of my inclining, and many remarks from one bystander to another, that the gentleman could go for'ard by the mail to-morrow, whereas to-night he would only be froze, and where was the good of a gentleman being froze—ah, let alone buried alive (which latter clause was added by a humorous helper as a joke at my expense, and was extremely well received), I saw my

portmanteau got out stiff, like a frozen body ; did the handsome thing by the guard and coachman ; wished them good-night and a prosperous journey ; and, a little ashamed of myself, after all, for leaving them to fight it out alone, followed the landlord, landlady, and waiter of the Holly-Tree upstairs.

I thought I had never seen such a large room as that into which they showed me. It had five windows, with dark red curtains that would have absorbed the light of a general illumination ; and there were complications of drapery at the top of the curtains, that went wandering about the wall in a most extraordinary manner. I asked for a smaller room, and they told me there was no smaller room. They could screen me in, however, the landlord said. They brought a great old japanned screen, with natives (Japanese, I suppose) engaged in a variety of idiotic pursuits all over it ; and left me roasting whole before an immense fire.

My bedroom was some quarter of a mile off, up a great staircase at the end of a long gallery ; and nobody knows what a misery this is to a bashful man who would rather not meet people on the stairs. It was the grimmest room I have ever had the nightmare in ; and all the furniture, from the four posts of the bed to the two old silver candlesticks, was tall, high-shouldered, and spindle-waisted. Below, in my sitting-room, if I looked round my screen, the wind rushed at me like a mad bull ; if I stuck to my arm-chair, the fire scorched me to the colour of a new brick. The chimney-piece was very high, and there was a bad glass—what I may call a wavy glass—above it, which, when I stood up, just showed me my

anterior phrenological developments — and these never look well, in any subject, cut short off at the eyebrow. If I stood with my back to the fire, a gloomy vault of darkness above and beyond the screen insisted on being looked at; and, in its dim remoteness, the drapery of the ten curtains of the five windows went twisting and creeping about, like a nest of gigantic worms.

I suppose that what I observe in myself must be observed by some other men of similar character in *themselves*; therefore I am emboldened to mention, that, when I travel, I never arrive at a place but I immediately want to go away from it. Before I had finished my supper of broiled fowl and mulled port, I had impressed upon the waiter in detail my arrangements for departure in the morning. Breakfast and bill at eight. Fly at nine. Two horses, or, if needful, even four.

Tired though I was, the night appeared about a week long. In oases of nightmare, I thought of Angela, and felt more depressed than ever by the reflection that I was on the shortest road to Gretna Green. What had *I* to do with Gretna Green? I was not going *that* way to the devil, but by the American route, I remarked in my bitterness.

In the morning I found that it was snowing still, that it had snowed all night, and that I was snowed up. Nothing could get out of that spot on the moor, or could come at it, until the road had been cut out by labourers from the market-town. When they might cut their way to the Holly-Tree nobody could tell me.

It was now Christmas Eve. I should have had a

dismal Christmas-time of it anywhere, and consequently that did not so much matter; still, being snowed up was like dying of frost, a thing I had not bargained for. I felt very lonely. Yet I could no more have proposed to the landlord and landlady to admit me to their society (though I should have liked it very much) than I could have asked them to present me with a piece of plate. Here my great secret, the real bashfulness of my character, is to be observed. Like most bashful men, I judge of other people as if they were bashful too. Besides being far too shame-faced to make the proposal myself, I really had a delicate misgiving that it would be in the last degree disconcerting to them.

Trying to settle down, therefore, in my solitude, I first of all asked what books there were in the house. The waiter brought me a "Book of Roads," two or three old newspapers, a little song-book, terminating in a collection of toasts and sentiments, a little jest-book, an odd volume of "Peregrine Pickle," and the "Sentimental Journey." I knew every word of the two last already, but I read them through again, then tried to hum all the songs (*Auld Lang Syne* was among them); went entirely through the jokes—in which I found a fund of melancholy adapted to my state of mind; proposed all the toasts, enunciated all the sentiments, and mastered the papers. The latter had nothing in them but stock advertisements, a meeting about a county rate, and a highway robbery. As I am a greedy reader, I could not make this supply hold out until night; it was exhausted by tea-time. Being then entirely cast upon my own resources, I got through an hour in considering what

to do next. Ultimately, it came into my head (from which I was anxious by any means to exclude Angela and Edwin), that I would endeavour to recall my experience of inns, and would try how long it lasted me. I stirred the fire, moved my chair a little to one side of the screen—not daring to go far, for I knew the wind was waiting to make a rush at me, I could hear it growling—and began.

My first impressions of an inn dated from the nursery ; consequently I went back to the nursery for a starting-point, and found myself at the knee of a sallow woman with a fishy eye, an aquiline nose, and a green gown, whose specialty was a dismal narrative of a landlord by the roadside, whose visitors unaccountably disappeared for many years, until it was discovered that the pursuit of his life had been to convert them into pies. For the better devotion of himself to this branch of industry, he had constructed a secret door behind the head of the bed ; and when the visitor (oppressed with pie) had fallen asleep, this wicked landlord would look softly in with a lamp in one hand and a knife in the other, would cut his throat, and would make him into pies ; for which purpose he had coppers, underneath a trap-door, always boiling ; and rolled out his pastry in the dead of the night. Yet even he was not insensible to the stings of conscience, for he never went to sleep without being heard to mutter, “Too much pepper !” which was eventually the cause of his being brought to justice. I had no sooner disposed of this criminal than there started up another of the same period, whose profession was originally housebreaking ; in the pursuit of which art he had had his right ear

chopped off one night, as he was burglariously getting in at a window, by a brave and lovely servant-maid (whom the aquiline-nosed woman, though not at all answering the description, always mysteriously implied to be herself). After several years, this brave and lovely servant-maid was married to the landlord of a country inn; which landlord had this remarkable characteristic, that he always wore a silk nightcap, and never would on any consideration take it off. At last, one night, when he was fast asleep, the brave and lovely woman lifted up his silk nightcap on the right side, and found that he had no ear there; upon which she sagaciously perceived that he was the clipped housebreaker, who had married her with the intention of putting her to death. She immediately heated the poker and terminated his career, for which she was taken to King George upon his throne, and received the compliments of royalty on her great discretion and valour. This same narrator, who had a ghoulish pleasure, I have long been persuaded, in terrifying me to the utmost confines of my reason, had another authentic anecdote within her own experience, founded, I now believe, upon "Raymond and Agnes, or the Bleeding Nun." She said it happened to her brother-in-law, who was immensely rich—which my father was not; and immensely tall—which my father was not. It was always a point with this ghoul to present my dearest relations and friends to my youthful mind under circumstances of disparaging contrast. The brother-in-law was riding once through a forest on a magnificent horse (we had no magnificent horse at our house), attended by a favourite and valuable Newfoundland dog (we had no dog), when

he found himself benighted, and came to an inn. A dark woman opened the door, and he asked her if he could have a bed there. She answered yes, and put his horse in the stable, and took him into a room where there were two dark men. While he was at supper, a parrot in the room began to talk, saying, "Blood, blood ! Wipe up the blood !" Upon which one of the dark men wrung the parrot's neck, and said he was fond of roasted parrots, and he meant to have this one for breakfast in the morning. After eating and drinking heartily, the immensely rich, tall brother-in-law went up to bed ; but he was rather vexed, because they had shut his dog in the stable, saying that they never allowed dogs in the house. He sat very quiet for more than an hour, thinking and thinking, when, just as his candle was burning out, he heard a scratch at the door. He opened the door, and there was the Newfoundland dog ! The dog came softly in, smelt about him, went straight to some straw in the corner which the dark men had said covered apples, tore the straw away, and disclosed two sheets steeped in blood. Just at that moment the candle went out, and the brother-in-law, looking through a chink in the door, saw the two dark men stealing upstairs ; one armed with a dagger that long (about five feet) ; the other carrying a chopper, a sack, and a spade. Having no remembrance of the close of this adventure, I suppose my faculties to have been always so frozen with terror at this stage of it, that the power of listening stagnated within me for some quarter of an hour.

These barbarous stories carried me, sitting there on the Holly-Tree hearth, to the roadside inn, renowned

in my time in a sixpenny book with a folding plate, representing in a central compartment of oval form the portrait of Jonathan Bradford, and in four corner compartments four incidents of the tragedy with which the name is associated—coloured with a hand at once so free and economical, that the bloom of Jonathan's complexion passed without any pause into the breeches of the ostler, and, smearing itself off into the next division, became rum in a bottle. Then I remembered how the landlord was found at the murdered traveller's bedside, with his own knife at his feet, and blood upon his hand; how he was hanged for the murder, notwithstanding his protestation that he had indeed come there to kill the traveller for his saddle-bags, but had been stricken motionless on finding him already slain; and how the ostler, years afterwards, owned the deed. By this time I had made myself quite uncomfortable. I stirred the fire, and stood with my back to it as long as I could bear the heat, looking up at the darkness beyond the screen, and at the wormy curtains creeping in and creeping out, like the worms in the ballad of Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene.

There was an inn in the cathedral town where I went to school, which had pleasanter recollections about it than any of these. I took it next. It was the inn where friends used to put up, and where we used to go to see parents, and to have salmon and fowls, and be tipped. It had an ecclesiastical sign—the mitre—and a bar that seemed to be the next best thing to a bishopric, it was so snug. I loved the landlord's youngest daughter to distraction—but let that pass. It was in this inn that I was cried over

by my rosy little sister, because I had acquired a black eye in a fight. And though she had been, that Holly-Tree night, for many a long year where all tears are dried, the mitre softened me yet.

“To be continued to-morrow,” said I, when I took my candle to go to bed. But my bed took it upon itself to continue the train of thought that night. It carried me away, like the enchanted carpet, to a distant place (though still in England), and there, alighting from a stage-coach at another inn in the snow, as I had actually done some years before, I repeated in my sleep a curious experience I had really had there. More than a year before I made the journey in the course of which I put up at that inn, I had lost a very near and dear friend by death. Every night since, at home or away from home, I had dreamed of that friend; sometimes as still living; sometimes as returning from the world or shadows to comfort me; always as being beautiful, placid, and happy, never in association with any approach to fear or distress. It was at a lonely inn in a wide moorland place, that I halted to pass the night. When I had looked from my bedroom window over the waste of snow on which the moon was shining, I sat down by my fire to write a letter. I had always, until that hour, kept it within my own breast that I dreamed every night of the dear lost one. But in the letter that I wrote I recorded the circumstance, and added that I felt much interested in proving whether the subject of my dream would still be faithful to me, travel-tired, and in that remote place. No. I lost the beloved figure of my vision in parting with the

secret. My sleep has never looked upon it since, in sixteen years, but once. I was in Italy, and awoke (or seemed to awake), the well-remembered voice distinctly in my ears, conversing with it. I entreated it, as it rose above my bed and soared up to the vaulted roof of the old room, to answer me a question I had asked touching the future life. My hands were still outstretched towards it as it vanished, when I heard a bell ringing by the garden wall, and a voice in the deep stillness of the night calling on all good Christians to pray for the souls of the dead ; it being All Souls' Eve.

To return to the Holly-Tree. When I awoke next day, it was freezing hard, and the lowering sky threatened more snow. My breakfast cleared away, I drew my chair into its former place, and, with the fire getting so much the better of the landscape that I sat in twilight, resumed my inn remembrances.

That was a good inn down in Wiltshire where I put up once, in the days of the hard Wiltshire ale, and before all beer was bitterness. It was on the skirts of Salisbury Plain, and the midnight wind that rattled my lattice window came moaning at me from Stonehenge. There was a hanger-on at that establishment (a supernaturally preserved Druid I believe him to have been, and to be still), with long white hair, and a flinty blue eye always looking afar off ; who claimed to have been a shepherd, and who seemed to be ever watching for the reappearance, on the verge of the horizon, of some ghostly flock of sheep that had been mutton for many ages. He was a man with a weird belief in him that no one could count the stones of

Stonehenge twice, and make the same number of them; likewise, that any one who counted them three times nine times, and then stood in the centre and said, "I dare!" would behold a tremendous apparition, and be stricken dead. He pretended to have seen a bustard (I suspect him to have been familiar with the dodo), in manner following: He was out upon the plain at the close of a late autumn day, when he dimly discerned, going on before him at a curious fitfully bounding pace, what he at first supposed to be a gig-umbrella that had been blown from some conveyance, but what he presently believed to be a lean dwarf man upon a little pony. Having followed this object for some distance without gaining on it, and having called to it many times without receiving any answer, he pursued it for miles and miles, when, at length coming up with it, he discovered it to be the last bustard in Great Britain, degenerated into a wingless state, and running along the ground. Resolved to capture him or perish in the attempt, he closed with the bustard; but the bustard, who had formed a counter-resolution that he should do neither, threw him, stunned him, and was last seen making off due west. This weird man, at that stage of metempsychosis, may have been a sleep-walker or an enthusiast or a robber; but I awoke one night to find him in the dark at my bedside, repeating the Athanasian Creed in a terrific voice. I paid my bill next day, and retired from the county with all possible precipitation.

That was not a commonplace story which worked itself out at a little inn in Switzerland, while I was staying there. It was a very homely place, in a

village of one narrow zig-zag street, among mountains, and you went in at the main door through the cow-house, and among the mules and the dogs and the fowls, before ascending a great bare staircase to the rooms; which were all of unpainted wood, without plastering or papering—like rough packing-cases. Outside there was nothing but the straggling street, a little toy church with a copper-coloured steeple, a pine forest, a torrent, mists, and mountain-sides. A young man belonging to this inn had disappeared eight weeks before (it was winter-time), and was supposed to have had some undiscovered love affair, and to have gone for a soldier. He had got up in the night, and dropped into the village street from the loft in which he slept with another man; and he had done it so quietly, that his companion and fellow-labourer had heard no movement when he was awakened in the morning, and they said, “Louis, where is Henri?” They looked for him high and low, in vain, and gave him up. Now, outside this inn, there stood, as there stood outside every dwelling in the village, a stack of firewood; but the stack belonging to the inn was higher than any of the rest, because the inn was the richest house, and burnt the most fuel. It began to be noticed, while they were looking high and low, that a bantam cock, part of the live stock of the inn, put himself wonderfully out of his way to get to the top of this wood-stack; and that he would stay there for hours and hours, crowing, until he appeared in danger of splitting himself. Five weeks went on—six weeks—and still this terrible bantam, neglecting his domestic

affairs, was always on the top of the wood-stack, crowing the very eyes out of his head. By this time it was perceived that Louis had become inspired with a violent animosity towards the terrible bantam, and one morning he was seen by a woman, who sat nursing her goître at a little window in a gleam of sun, to catch up a rough billet of wood, with a great oath, hurl it at the terrible bantam crowing on the wood-stack, and bring him down dead. Hereupon the woman, with a sudden light in her mind, stole round to the back of the wood-stack, and, being a good climber, as all those women are, climbed up, and soon was seen upon the summit, screaming, looking down the hollow within, and crying, "Seize Louis, the murderer! Ring the church bell! Here is the body!" I saw the murderer that day, and I saw him as I sat by my fire at the Holly-Tree Inn, and I see him now, lying shackled with cords on the stable litter, among the mild eyes and the smoking breath of the cows, waiting to be taken away by the police, and stared at by the fearful village. A heavy animal—the dullest animal in the stables—with a stupid head, and a lumpish face devoid of any trace of sensibility, who had been, within the knowledge of the murdered youth, an embezzler of certain small moneys belonging to his master, and who had taken this hopeful mode of putting a possible accuser out of his way. All of which he confessed next day, like a sulky wretch who couldn't be troubled any more, now that they had got hold of him, and meant to make an end of him. I saw him once again, on the day of my departure from the inn.

In that canton the headsman still does his office with a sword ; and I came upon this murderer sitting bound to a chair, with his eyes bandaged, on a scaffold in a little market-place. In that instant, a great sword (loaded with quicksilver in the thick part of the blade), swept round him like a gust of wind or fire, and there was no such creature in the world. My wonder was, not that he was so suddenly despatched, but that any head was left unreaped, within a radius of fifty yards of that tremendous sickle.

That was a good inn, too, with the kind, cheerful landlady and the honest landlord, where I lived in the shadow of Mont Blanc, and where one of the apartments has a zoological papering on the walls, not so accurately joined but that the elephant occasionally rejoices in a tiger's hind legs and tail, while the lion puts on a trunk and tusks, and the bear, moulting as it were, appears as to portions of himself like a leopard. I made several American friends at that inn, who all called Mont Blanc Mount Blank—except one good-humoured gentleman, of a very sociable nature, who became on such intimate terms with it that he spoke of it familiarly as “ Blank ” ; observing, at breakfast, “ Blank looks pretty tall this morning ; ” or considerably doubting in the courtyard in the evening, whether there warn't some go-ahead naters in our country, sir, that would make out the top of Blank in a couple of hour from first start—now !

Once I passed a fortnight at an inn in the north of England, where I was haunted by the ghost of a tremendous pie. It was a Yorkshire pie, like a

fort—an abandoned fort with nothing in it ; but the waiter had a fixed idea that it was a point of ceremony at every meal to put the pie on the table. After some days I tried to hint, in several delicate ways, that I considered the pie done with ; as, for example, by emptying fag-ends of glasses of wine into it ; putting cheese-plates and spoons into it, as into a basket ; putting wine-bottles into it, as into a cooler ; but always in vain, the pie being invariably cleaned out again and brought up as before. At last, beginning to be doubtful whether I was not the victim of a spectral illusion, and whether my health and spirits might not sink under the horrors of an imaginary pie, I cut a triangle out of it, fully as large as the musical instrument of that name in a powerful orchestra. Human prevision could not have foreseen the result—but the waiter mended the pie. With some effectual species of cement, he adroitly fitted the triangle in again, and I paid my reckoning and fled.

The Holly-Tree was getting rather dismal. I made an overland expedition beyond the screen, and penetrated as far as the fourth window. Here I was driven back by stress of weather. Arrived at my winter-quarters once more, I made up the fire, and took another inn.

It was in the remotest part of Cornwall. A great annual miners' feast was being holden at the inn, when I and my travelling companions presented ourselves at night among the wild crowd that were dancing before it by torchlight. We had had a break-down in the dark, on a stony morass some miles away ; and I had the honour of leading one

of the unharnessed post-horses. If any lady or gentleman, on perusal of the present lines, will take any very tall post-horse with his traces hanging about his legs, and will conduct him by the bearing-rein into the heart of a country dance of a hundred and fifty couples, that lady or gentleman will then, and only then, form an adequate idea of the extent to which that post-horse will tread on his conductor's toes. Over and above which, the post-horse, finding three hundred people whirling about him, will probably rear, and also lash out with his hind legs, in a manner incompatible with dignity or self-respect on his conductor's part. With such little drawbacks on my usually impressive aspect, I appeared at this Cornish inn, to the unutterable wonder of the Cornish miners. It was full, and twenty times full, and nobody could be received but the post-horse—though to get rid of that noble animal was something. While my fellow-travellers and I were discussing how to pass the night and so much of the next day as must intervene before the jovial blacksmith and the jovial wheelwright would be in a condition to go out on the morass and mend the coach, an honest man stepped forth from the crowd and proposed his unlet floor of two rooms, with supper of eggs and bacon, ale and punch. We joyfully accompanied him home to the strangest of clean houses, where we were well entertained to the satisfaction of all parties. But the novel feature of the entertainment was that our host was a chair-maker, and that the chairs assigned to us were mere frames, altogether without bottoms of any sort; so that we passed the evening on perches. Nor was this the absurdest consequence;

for when we unbent at supper, and any one of us gave way to laughter, he forgot the peculiarity of his position, and instantly disappeared. I myself, doubled up into an attitude from which self-extrication was impossible, was taken out of my frame, like a clown in a comic pantomime who has tumbled into a tub, five times by the taper's light during the eggs and bacon.

The Holly-Tree was fast reviving within me a sense of loneliness. I began to feel conscious that my subject would never carry on until I was dug out. I might be a week here—weeks!

There was a story with a singular idea in it, connected with an inn I once passed a night at in a picturesque old town on the Welsh border. In a large double-bedded room of this inn there had been a suicide committed by poison, in one bed, while a tired traveller slept unconscious in the other. After that time, the suicide bed was never used, but the other constantly was; the disused bedstead remaining in the room empty, though as to all other respects in its old state. The story ran, that whosoever slept in this room, though never so entire a stranger, from never so far off, was invariably observed to come down in the morning with an impression that he smelt laudanum, and that his mind always turned upon the subject of suicide; to which, whatever kind of man he might be, he was certain to make some reference if he conversed with any one. This went on for years, until it at length induced the landlord to take the disused bedstead down, and bodily burn it—bed, hangings, and all. The strange influence (this was the story) now

changed to a fainter one, but never changed afterwards. The occupant of that room, with occasional but very rare exceptions, would come down in the morning, trying to recall a forgotten dream he had had in the night. The landlord, on his mentioning his perplexity, would suggest various commonplace subjects, not one of which, as he very well knew, was the true subject. But the moment the landlord suggested "Poison," the traveller started and cried, "Yes!" He never failed to accept that suggestion, and he never recalled any more of the dream.

This reminiscence brought the Welsh inns in general before me; with the women in their round hats, and the harpers with their white beards (venerable, but humbugs, I am afraid), playing outside the door while I took my dinner. The transition was natural to the Highland inns, with the oatmeal bannocks, the honey, the venison steaks, the trout from the loch, the whisky, and perhaps (having the materials so temptingly at hand) the Athol brose. Once was I coming south from the Scottish Highlands in hot haste, hoping to change quickly at the station at the bottom of a certain wild historical glen, when these eyes did with mortification see the landlord come out with a telescope and sweep the whole prospect for the horses; which horses were away picking up their own living, and did not heave in sight under four hours. Having thought of the loch-trout, I was taken by quick association to the anglers' inns of England (I have assisted at innumerable feats of angling by lying in the bottom of the boat, whole summer days, doing nothing with the greatest

perseverance; which I have generally found to be as effectual towards the taking of fish as the finest tackle and the utmost science), and to the pleasant white, clean, flower-pot decorated bedrooms of those inns, overlooking the river, and the ferry, and the green ait, and the church-spire, and the country bridge; and to the peerless Emma with the bright eyes and the pretty smile, who waited, bless her! with a natural grace that would have converted Blue-Beard. Casting my eyes upon my Holly-Tree fire, I next discerned among the glowing coals the pictures of a score or more of those wonderful English posting-inns which we are all so sorry to have lost, which were so large and so comfortable, and which were such monuments of British submission to rapacity and extortion. He who would see these houses pining away, let him walk from Basingstoke, or even Windsor, to London, by way of Hounslow, and moralise on their perishing remains; the stables crumbling to dust; unsettled labourers and wanderers bivouacking in the out-houses; grass growing in the yards; the rooms, where erst so many hundred beds of down were made up, let off to Irish lodgers at eighteenpence a week; a little ill-looking beer shop shrinking in the tap of former days, burning coach-house gates for firewood, having one of its two windows bunged up, as if it had received punishment in a fight with the railroad; a low, bandy-legged, brick-making bulldog standing in the doorway. What could I next see in my fire so naturally as the new railway house of these times near the dismal country station; with nothing particular on draught but

-cold air and damp, nothing worth mentioning in the larder but new mortar, and no business doing beyond a conceited affectation of luggage in the hall? Then I came to the inns of Paris, with the pretty apartment of four pieces up one hundred and seventy-five waxed stairs, the privilege of ringing the bell all day long without influencing anybody's mind, or body, but your own, and the not-too-much-for-dinner, considering the price. Next to the provincial inns of France, with the great church-tower rising above the courtyard, the horse-bells jingling merrily up and down the street beyond, and the clocks of all descriptions in all the rooms, which are never right, unless taken at the precise minute when, by getting exactly twelve hours too fast or too slow, they unintentionally become so. Away I went, next, to the lesser roadside inns of Italy; where all the dirty clothes in the house (not in wear) are always lying in your anteroom; where the mosquitoes make a raisin pudding of your face in summer, and the cold bites it blue in winter; where you get what you can, and forget what you can't; where I should again like to be boiling my tea in a pocket-handkerchief dumpling, for want of a tea-pot. So to the old palace inns and old monastery inns, in towns and cities of the same bright country; with their massive quadrangular staircases, whence you may look from among clustering pillars high into the blue vault of heaven; with their stately banqueting-rooms, and vast refectories; with their labyrinths of ghostly bed-chambers, and their glimpses into gorgeous streets that have no appearance of reality or possibility.

So to the close little inns of the malaria districts, with their pale attendants, and their peculiar smell of never letting in the air. So to the immense fantastic inns of Venice, with the cry of the gondolier below, as he skims the corner; the grip of the watery odours on one particular little bit of the bridge of your nose (which is never released while you stay there); and the great bell of St. Mark's Cathedral tolling midnight. Next I put up for a minute at the restless inns upon the Rhine, where your going to bed, no matter at what hour, appears to be the tocsin for everybody else's getting up; and where, in the table-d'hôte room at the end of the long table (with several towers of Babel on it at the other end, all made of white plates), one knot of stoutish men, entirely dressed in jewels and dirt, and having nothing else upon them, *will* remain all night, clinking glasses, and singing about the river that flows, and the grape that grows, and Rhine wine that beguiles, and Rhine woman that smiles, and hi drink drink my friend and ho drink drink my brother, and all the rest of it. I departed thence, as a matter of course, to other German inns, where all the eatables are soddened down to the same flavour, and where the mind is disturbed by the apparition of hot puddings, and boiled cherries, sweet and slab, at awfully unexpected periods of the repast. After a draught of sparkling beer from a foaming glass jug, and a glance of recognition through the windows of the student beer-houses at Heidelberg and elsewhere, I put out to sea for the inns of America with their four hundred beds apiece, and their eight

or nine hundred ladies and gentlemen at dinner every day. Again I stood in the bar-rooms thereof, taking my evening cobbler, julep, sling, or cocktail. Again I listened to my friend the general—whom I had known for five minutes, in the course of which period he had made me intimate for life with two majors, who again had made me intimate for life with three colonels, who again had made me brother to twenty-two civilians—again, I say, I listened to my friend the general, leisurely expounding the resources of the establishment, as to gentlemen's morning-room, sir; ladies' morning-room, sir; gentlemen's evening-room, sir; ladies' evening-room, sir; ladies' and gentlemen's evening reuniting-room, sir; music-room, sir; reading-room, sir; over four hundred sleeping-rooms, sir; and the entire planned and finited within twelve calendar months from the first clearing off of the old encumbrances on the plot, at a cost of five hundred thousand dollars, sir. Again I found, as to my individual way of thinking, that the greater, the more gorgeous, and the more dollarous the establishment was, the less desirable it was. Nevertheless, again I drank my cobbler, julep, sling, or cocktail, in all good-will, to my friend the general, and my friends the majors, colonels, and civilians all; full well knowing that, whatever little motes my beamy eyes may have descried in theirs, they belong to a kind, generous, large-hearted, and great people.

I had been going on lately at a quick pace to keep my solitude out of my mind; but here I broke down for good, and gave up the subject. What was I to do? What was to become of me? Into

what extremity was I submissively to sink? Supposing that, like Baron Trenck, I looked out for a mouse or spider, and found one, and beguiled my imprisonment by training it? Even that might be dangerous with a view to the future. I might be so far gone when the road did come to be cut through the snow, that, on my way forth, I might burst into tears, and beseech, like the prisoner who was released in his old age from the Bastille, to be taken back again to the five windows, the ten curtains, and the sinuous drapery.

A desperate idea came into my head. Under any other circumstances I should have rejected it; but, in the strait at which I was, I held it fast. Could I so far overcome the inherent bashfulness which withheld me from the landlord's table and the company I might find there, as to call up the boots, and ask him to take a chair—and something in a liquid form—and talk to me? I could. I would. I did.

SECOND BRANCH.

THE BOOTS.

WHERE had he been in his time? he repeated, when I asked him the question. Lord, he had been everywhere! And what had he been? Bless you, he had been everything you could mention a'most!

Seen a good deal? Why, of course he had. I should say so, he could assure me, if I only knew about a twentieth part of what had come in *his* way. Why, it would be easier for him, he expected, to tell

what he hadn't seen than what he had. Ah! A deal, it would.

What was the curiousest thing he had seen? Well! He didn't know. He couldn't momentarily name what was the curiousest thing he had seen—unless it was a unicorn—and he see *him* once at a fair. But supposing a young gentleman not eight year old was to run away with a fine young woman of seven, might I think *that* a queer start? Certainly. Then that was a start as he himself had had his blessed eyes on, and he had cleaned the shoes they run away in—and they was so little that he couldn't get his hand into 'em.

Master Harry Walmers's father, you see, he lived at the Elmses, down away by Shooter's Hill there, six or seven miles from Lunnon. He was a gentleman of spirit, and good-looking, and held his head up when he walked, and had what you may call fire about him. He wrote poetry, and he rode, and he ran, and he cricketed, and he danced, and he acted, and he done it all equally beautiful. He was uncommon proud of Master Harry as was his only child; but he didn't spoil him neither. He was a gentleman that had a will of his own and a eye of his own, and that would be minded. Consequently, though he made quite a companion of the fine bright boy, and was delighted to see him so fond of reading his fairy books, and was never tired of hearing him say my name is Norval, or hearing him sing his songs about young May moons is beaming love, and when he as adores thee has left but the name, and that; still he kept the command over the child, and the child *was* a child, and it's to be wished more of 'em was!

How did boots happen to know all this? Why, through being under-gardener. Of course he couldn't be under-gardener, and be always about, in the summer-time, near the windows on the lawn, a-mowing, and sweeping, and weeding, and pruning, and this and that, without getting acquainted with the ways of the family. Even supposing Master Harry hadn't come to him one morning early, and said, "Cobbs, how should you spell Norah, if you was asked?" and then began cutting it in print all over the fence.

He couldn't say he had taken particular notice of children before that; but really it was pretty to see them two mites a-going about the place together, deep in love. And the courage of the boy! Bless your soul, he'd have throwed off his little hat, and tucked up his little sleeves, and gone in at a lion, he would, if they had happened to meet one, and she had been frightened of him. One day he stops, along with her, where boots was hoeing weeds in the gravel, and says, speaking up, "Cobbs," he says, "I like *you*." "Do you, sir? I'm proud to hear it." "Yes, I do, Cobbs. Why do I like you, do you think, Cobbs?" "Don't know, Master Harry, I am sure." "Because Norah likes you, Cobbs." "Indeed, sir? That's very gratifying." "Gratifying, Cobbs? It's better than millions of the brightest diamonds to be liked by Norah." "Certainly, sir." "You're going away, ain't you, Cobbs?" "Yes, sir." "Would you like another situation, Cobbs?" "Well, sir, I shouldn't object, if it was a good 'un." "Then, Cobbs," says he, "you shall be our head-gardener when we are married." And he tucks her, in her

little sky-blue mantle, under his arm, and walks away.

Boots could assure me that it was better than a pacter, and equal to a play, to see them babies, with their long, bright, curling hair, their sparkling eyes, and their beautiful light tread, a-rambling about the garden, deep in love. Boots was of opinion that the birds believed they was birds, and kept up with 'em, singing to please 'em. Sometimes they would creep under the tulip-tree, and would sit there with their arms round one another's necks, and their soft cheeks touching, a-reading about the prince and the dragon, and the good and bad enchanters, and the king's fair daughter. Sometimes he would hear them planning about having a house in a forest, keeping bees and a cow, and living entirely on milk and honey. Once he came upon them by the pond, and heard Master Harry say, "Adorable Norah, kiss me, and say you love me to distraction, or I'll jump in head-foremost." And boots made no question he would have done it if she hadn't complied. On the whole, boots said it had a tendency to make him feel as if he was in love himself—only he didn't exactly know who with.

"Cobbs," said Master Harry, one evening, when Cobbs was watering the flowers, "I am going on a visit, this present midsummer, to my grandmamma's at York."

"Are you indeed, sir? I hope you'll have a pleasant time. I am going into Yorkshire, myself, when I leave here."

"Are you going to your grandmamma's, Cobbs?"

"No, sir. I haven't got such a thing."

"Not as a grandmamma, Cobbs?"

"No, sir."

The boy looked on at the watering of the flowers for a little while, and then said, "I shall be very glad indeed to go, Cobbs—Norah's going."

"You'll be all right then, sir," says Cobbs, "with your beautiful sweetheart by your side."

"Cobbs," returned the boy, flushing, "I never let anybody joke about it, when I can prevent them."

"It wasn't a joke, sir," says Cobbs, with humility—"wasn't so meant."

"I am glad of that, Cobbs, because I like you, you know, and you're going to live with us.—Cobbs!"

"Sir."

"What do you think my grandmother gives me when I go down there?"

"I couldn't so much as make a guess, sir."

"A Bank of England five-pound note, Cobbs."

"Whew!" says Cobbs, "that's a spanking sum of money, Master Harry."

"A person could do a good deal with such a sum of money as that—couldn't a person, Cobbs?"

"I believe you, sir!"

"Cobbs," said the boy, "I'll tell you a secret. At Norah's house, they have been joking her about me, and pretending to laugh at our being engaged—pretending to make game of it, Cobbs!"

"Such, sir," says Cobbs, "is the depravity of human nature."

The boy, looking exactly like his father, stood for a few minutes with his glowing face towards the sunset, and then departed with, "Good-night, Cobbs, I'm going in."

If I was to ask boots how it happened that he was

a-going to leave that place just at that present time, well, he couldn't rightly answer me. He did suppose he might have stayed there till now if he had been anyways inclined. But, you see, he was younger then, and he wanted change. That's what he wanted—change. Mr. Walmers, he said to him when he gave him notice of his intentions to leave, "Cobbs," he says, "have you anythink to complain of? I make the inquiry because if I find that any of my people really has anythink to complain of, I wish to make it right if I can." "No, sir," says Cobbs; "thanking you, sir, I find myself as well sitiuated here as I could hope to be anywheres. The truth is, sir, that I'm a-going to seek my fortun'." "Oh, indeed, Cobbs!" he says; "I hope you may find it." And boots could assure me—which he did, touching his hair with his bootjack, as a salute in the way of his present calling—that he hadn't found it yet.

Well, sir! Boots left the Elmses when his time was up, and Master Harry, he went down to the old lady's at York, which old lady would have given that child the teeth out of her head (if she had had any), she was so wrapped up in him. What does that infant do—for infant you may call him and be within the mark—but cut away from that old lady's with his Norah, on a expedition to go to Gretna Green and be married!

Sir, boots was at this identical Holly-Tree Inn (having left it several times since to better himself, but always come back through one thing or another), when, one summer afternoon, the coach drives up, and out of the coach gets them two children. The guard says to our governor, "I don't quite make

out these little passengers, but the young gentleman's words was, that they was to be brought here." The young gentleman gets out; hands his lady out; gives the guard something for himself; says to our governor, "We're to stop here to-night, please. Sitting-room and two bedrooms will be required. Chops and cherry-pudding for two!" and tucks her, in her little sky-blue mantle, under his arm, and walks into the house much bolder than brass.

Boots leaves me to judge what the amazement of that establishment was, when these two tiny creatures all alone by themselves was marched into the angel—so much more so, when he, who had seen them without their seeing him, give the governor his views of the expedition they was upon. "Cobbs," says the governor, "if this is so, I must set off myself to York, and quiet their friends' minds. In which case you must keep your eye upon 'em, and humour 'em, till I come back. But before I take these measures, Cobbs, I should wish you to find from themselves whether your opinion is correct." "Sir, to you," says Cobbs, "that shall be done directly."

So boots goes upstairs to the angel, and there he finds Master Harry on a e-normous sofa—immense at any time, but looking like the Great Bed of Ware, compared with him—a-drying the eyes of Miss Norah with his pocket-hankecher. Their little legs was entirely off the ground, of course, and it really is not possible for boots to express to me how small them children looked.

"It's Cobbs! It's Cobbs!" cries Master Harry, and comes running to him and catching hold of his

hand. Miss Norah comes running to him on t'other side and catching hold of his t'other hand, and they both jump for joy.

"I see you a-getting out, sir," says Cobbs. "I thought it was you. I thought I couldn't be mistaken in your height and figure. What's the object of your journey, sir?—matrimonial?"

"We are going to be married, Cobbs, at Gretna Green," returned the boy. "We have run away on purpose. Norah has been in rather low spirits, Cobbs; but she'll be happy, now we have found you to be our friend."

"Thank you, sir, and thank *you*, miss," says Cobbs, "for your good opinion. *Did* you bring any luggage with you, sir?"

If I will believe boots when he gives me his word and honour upon it, the lady had got a parasol, a smelling-bottle, a round and a half of cold buttered toast, eight peppermint drops, and a hair-brush—seemingly a doll's. The gentleman had got about half a dozen yards of string, a knife, three or four sheets of writing-paper folded up surprising small, an orange, and a chaney mug with his name upon it.

"What may be the exact natur' of your plans, sir?" says Cobbs.

"To go on," replied the boy—which the courage of that boy was something wonderful!—"in the morning, and be married to-morrow."

"Just so, sir," says Cobbs. "Would it meet your views, sir, if I was to accompany you?"

When Cobbs said this, they both jumped for joy again, and cried out, "Oh, yes, yes, Cobbs! Yes!"

"Well, sir," says Cobbs. "If you will excuse my

having the freedom to give an opinion, what I should recommend would be this. I'm acquainted with a pony, sir, which, put in a pheayton that I could borrow, would take you and Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior (myself driving, if you approved), to the end of your journey in a very short space of time. I am not altogether sure, sir, that this pony will be at liberty to-morrow, but even if you had to wait over to-morrow for him, it might be worth your while. As to the small account here, sir, in case you was to find yourself running at all short, that don't signify; because I'm a part proprietor of this inn, and it could stand over."

Boots assures me that when they clapped their hands, and jumped for joy again, and called him "Good Cobbs!" and "Dear Cobbs!" and bent across him to kiss one another in the delight of their confiding hearts, he felt himself the meanest rascal for deceiving 'em that ever was born.

"Is there anything you want just at present, sir?" says Cobbs, mortally ashamed of himself.

"We should like some cakes after dinner," answered Master Harry, folding his arms, putting out one leg, and looking straight at him, "and two apples—and jam. With dinner we should like to have toast and water. But Norah has always been accustomed to half a glass of currant wine at dessert. And so have I."

"It shall be ordered at the bar, sir," says Cobbs; and away he went.

Boots has the feeling as fresh upon him at this minute of speaking as he had then, that he would far rather have had it out in half a dozen rounds with

the governor than have combined with him ; and that he wished with all his heart there was any impossible place where those two babies could make an impossible marriage, and live impossibly happy ever afterwards. However, as it couldn't be, he went into the governor's plans, and the governor set off for York in half an hour.

The way in which the women of that house—without exception—every one of 'em—married *and* single—took to that boy when they heard the story, boots considers surprising. It was as much as he could do to keep 'em from dashing into the room and kissing him. They climbed up all sorts of places, at the risk of their lives, to look at him through a pane of glass. They was seven deep at the keyhole. They was out of their minds about him and his bold spirit.

In the evening, boots went into the room to see how the runaway couple was getting on. The gentleman was on the window-seat, supporting the lady in his arms. She had tears upon her face, and was lying, very tired and half asleep, with her head upon his shoulder.

“Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, fatigued, sir?” says Cobbs.

“Yes, she is tired, Cobbs ; but she is not used to be away from home, and she has been in low spirits again. Cobbs, do you think you could bring a biffin, please ?

“I ask your pardon, sir,” says Cobbs. “What was it you——”

“I think a Norfolk biffin would rouse her, Cobbs. She is very fond of them.”

Boots withdrew in search of the required restorative, and, when he brought it in, the gentleman handed it to the lady, and fed her with a spoon, and took a little himself; the lady being heavy with sleep, and rather cross. "What should you think, sir," says Cobbs, "of a chamber candlestick?" The gentleman approved; the chambermaid went first, up the great staircase; the lady, in her sky-blue mantle, followed, gallantly escorted by the gentleman; the gentleman embraced her at her door, and retired to his own apartment, where boots softly locked him up.

Boots couldn't but feel with increased acuteness what a base deceiver he was, when they consulted him at breakfast (they had ordered sweet milk-and-water, and toast and currant jelly, over-night) about the pony. It really was as much as he could do, he don't mind confessing to me, to look them two young things in the face, and think what a wicked old father of lies he had grown up to be. Howsomever, he went on a-lying like a Trojan about the pony. He told 'em that it did so unfort'nately happen that the pony was half clipped, you see, and that he couldn't be taken out in that state, for fear it should strike to his inside. But that he'd be finished clipping in the course of the day, and that to-morrow morning at eight o'clock the pheayton would be ready. Boots's view of the whole case, looking back on it in my room, is that Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, was beginning to give in. She hadn't had her hair curled when she went to bed, and she didn't seem quite up to brushing it herself, and its getting in her eyes put her out. But nothing put out Master

Harry. He sat behind his breakfast-cup, a-tearing away at the jelly, as if he had been his own father.

After breakfast, boots is inclined to consider that they drawed soldiers—at least, he knows that many such was found in the fireplace, all on horseback. In the course of the morning, Master Harry rang the bell—it was surprising how that there boy did carry on—and said, in a sprightly way, “Cobbs, is there any good walks in this neighbourhood?”

“Yes, sir, says Cobbs. “There’s Love Lane.”

“Get out with you, Cobbs!”—that was that there boy’s expression—“you’re joking.”

“Begging your pardon, sir,” says Cobbs, “there really is Love Lane. And a pleasant walk it is, and proud shall I be to show it to yourself and Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior.”

“Norah, dear,” said Master Harry, “this is curious. We really ought to see Love Lane. Put on your bonnet, my sweetest darling, and we will go there with Cobbs.”

Boots leaves me to judge what a beast he felt himself to be, when that young pair told him, as they all three jogged along together, that they had made up their minds to give him two thousand guineas a year as head-gardener, on accounts of his being so true a friend to ’em. Boots could have wished at the moment that the earth would have opened and swallowed him up, he felt so mean, with their beaming eyes a-looking at him, and believing him. Well, sir, he turned the conversation as well as he could, and he took ’em down Love Lane to the water-meadows, and there Master Harry would have drowned himself in half a moment more, a-getting

out a water-lily for her—but nothing daunted that boy. Well, sir, they was tired out. All being so new and strange to 'em, they was tired as tired could be. And they laid down on a bank of daisies, like the children in the wood, leastways meadows, and fell asleep.

Boots don't know—perhaps I do—but never mind, it don't signify either way—why it made a man fit to make a fool of himself to see them two pretty babies a-lying there in the clear still sunny day, not dreaming half so hard when they was asleep as they done when they was awake. But, Lord! when you come to think of yourself, you know, and what a game you have been up to ever since you was in your own cradle, and what a poor sort of a chap you are, and how it's always either yesterday with you, or else to-morrow, and never to-day, that's where it is!

Well, sir, they woke up at last, and then one thing was getting pretty clear to boots, namely, that Mrs. Harry Walmerses, junior's, temper was on the move. When Master Harry took her round the waist, she said he “teased her so;” and when he says, “Norah, my young May moon, your Harry tease you?” she tells him, “Yes; and I want to go home!”

A biled fowl, and baked bread-and-butter pudding, brought Mrs. Walmers up a little; but boots could have wished, he must privately own to me, to have seen her more sensible of the voice of love, and less abandoning of herself to currants. However, Master Harry, he kept up, and his noble heart was as fond as ever. Mrs. Walmers turned very sleepy about dusk, and began to cry. Therefore, Mrs. Walmers

went off to bed as per yesterday; and Master Harry ditto repeated.

About eleven or twelve at night comes back the governor in a chaise, along with Mr. Walmers and a elderly lady. Mr. Walmers looks amused and very serious, both at once, and says to our missis, "We are much indebted to you, ma'am, for your kind care of our little children, which we can never sufficiently acknowledge. Pray, ma'am, where is my boy?" Our missis says, "Cobbs has the dear child in charge, sir. Cobbs, show forty!" Then he says to Cobbs, "Ah, Cobbs, I am glad to see *you!* I understood you was here!" And Cobbs says, "Yes, sir. Your most obedient, sir."

I may be surprised to hear boots say it, perhaps; but boots assures me that his heart beat like a hammer, going upstairs. "I beg your pardon, sir," says he, while unlocking the door; "I hope you are not angry with Master Harry. For Master Harry is a fine boy, sir, and will do you credit and honour." And boots signifies to me, that, if the fine boy's father had contradicted him in the daring state of mind in which he then was, he thinks he should have "fetched him a crack," and taken the consequences.

But Mr. Walmers only says, "No, Cobbs. No, my good fellow. Thank you!" And, the door being opened, goes in.

Boots goes in too, holding the light, and he sees Mr. Walmers go up to the bedside, bend gently down, and kiss the little sleeping face. Then he stands looking at it for a minute, looking wonderfully like it (they do say he ran away with Mrs. Walmers); and then he gently shakes the little shoulder.

"Harry, my dear boy! Harry!"

Master Harry starts up and looks at him. Looks at Cobbs too. Such is the honour of that mite, that he looks at Cobbs, to see whether he has brought him into trouble.

"I am not angry, my child. I only want you to dress yourself and come home."

"Yes, pa."

Master Harry dresses himself quickly. His breast begins to swell when he has nearly finished, and it swells more and more as he stands, at last, a-looking at his father: his father standing a-looking at him, the quiet image of him.

"Please may I"—the spirit of that little creature, and the way he kept his rising tears down!—"please, dear pa—may I—kiss Norah before I go?"

"You may, my child."

So he takes Master Harry in his hand, and boots leads the way with the candle, and they come to that other bedroom, where the elderly lady is seated by the bed, and poor little Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, is fast asleep. There the father lifts the child up to the pillow, and he lays his little face down for an instant by the little warm face of poor unconscious little Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, and gently draws it to him—a sight so touching to the chambermaids who are peeping through the door, that one of them calls out, "It's a shame to part 'em!" But this chambermaid was always, as boots informs me, a soft-hearted one. Not that there was any harm in that girl. Far from it.

Finally, boots says, that's all about it. Mr. Walmers drove away in the chaise, having hold of Master Harry's hand. The elderly lady and Mrs.

Harry Walmers, junior, that was never to be (she married a captain long afterwards, and died in India), went off next day. In conclusion, boots put it to me whether I hold with him in two opinions: firstly, that there are not many couples on their way to be married who are half as innocent of guile as those two children; secondly, that it would be a jolly good thing for a great many couples on their way to be married, if they could only be stopped in time, and brought back separately.

THIRD BRANCH.

THE BILL.

I HAD been snowed up a whole week. The time had hung so lightly on my hands, that I should have been in great doubt of the fact but for a piece of documentary evidence that lay upon my table.

The road had been dug out of the snow on the previous day, and the document in question was my bill. It testified emphatically to my having eaten and drunk, and warmed myself, and slept among the sheltering branches of the Holly-Tree, seven days and nights.

I had yesterday allowed the road twenty-four hours to improve itself, finding that I required that additional margin of time for the completion of my task. I had ordered my bill to be upon the table, and a chaise to be at the door, "at eight o'clock to-morrow evening." It was eight o'clock to-morrow evening when I buckled up my travelling writing-desk in its leather

case, paid my bill, and got on my warm coats and wrappers. Of course, no time now remained for my travelling on to add a frozen tear to the icicles which were doubtless hanging plentifully about the farmhouse where I had first seen Angela. What I had to do was to get across to Liverpool by the shortest open road, there to meet my heavy baggage and embark. It was quite enough to do, and I had not an hour too much time to do it in.

I had taken leave of all my Holly-Tree friends—almost, for the time being, of my bashfulness too—and was standing for half a minute at the inn door watching the ostler as he took another turn at the cord which tied my portmanteau on the chaise, when I saw lamps coming down towards the Holly-Tree. The road was so padded with snow that no wheels were audible ; but all of us who were standing at the inn door saw lamps coming on, and at a lively rate too, between the walls of snow that had been heaped up on either side of the track. The chambermaid instantly divined how the case stood, and called to the ostler, “Tom, this is a Gretna job !” The ostler, knowing that her sex instinctively scented a marriage, or anything in that direction, rushed up the yard bawling, “Next four out !” and in a moment the whole establishment was thrown into commotion.

I had a melancholy interest in seeing the happy man who loved and was beloved ; and therefore, instead of driving off at once, I remained at the inn door when the fugitives drove up. A bright-eyed fellow, muffled in a mantle, jumped out so briskly that he almost overthrew me. He turned to apologise, and, by Heaven, it was Edwin !

"Charley!" said he, recoiling. "Gracious powers, what do you do here?"

"Edwin," said I, recoiling, "gracious powers, what do *you* do here?" I struck my forehead as I said it, and an insupportable blaze of light seemed to shoot before my eyes.

He hurried me into the little parlour (always kept with a slow fire in it, and no poker), where posting company waited while their horses were putting to, and, shutting the door, said—

"Charley, forgive me!"

"Edwin!" I returned. "Was this well? When I loved her so dearly! When I had garnered up my heart so long!" I could say no more.

He was shocked when he saw how moved I was, and made the cruel observation, that he had not thought I should have taken it so much to heart.

I looked at him. I reproached him no more. But I looked at him.

"My dear, dear Charley," said he, "don't think ill of me, I beseech you! I know you have a right to my utmost confidence, and, believe me, you have ever had it until now. I abhor secrecy. Its meanness is intolerable to me. But I and my dear girl have observed it for your sake."

He and his dear girl! It steeled me.

"You have observed it for my sake, sir?" said I, wondering how his frank face could face it out so.

"Yes?—and Angela's," said he.

I found the room reeling round in an uncertain way, like a labouring humming-top. "Explain yourself," said I, holding on by one hand to an arm-chair.

"Dear old darling Charley!" returned Edwin, in

his cordial manner, "consider! When you were going on so happily with Angela, why should I compromise you with the old gentleman by making you a party to our engagement, and (after he had declined my proposals) to our secret intention? Surely it was better that you should be able honourably to say, 'He never took counsel with me, never told me, never breathed a word of it.' If Angela suspected it, and showed me all the favour and support she could—God bless her for a precious creature and a priceless wife!—I couldn't help that. Neither I nor Emmeline ever told her, any more than we told you. And for the same good reason, Charley; trust me, for the same good reason, and no other upon earth!"

Emmeline was Angela's cousin. Lived with her. Had been brought up with her. Was her father's ward. Had property.

"Emmeline is in the chaise, my dear Edwin?" said I, embracing him with the greatest affection.

"My good fellow!" said he, "do you suppose I should be going to Gretna Green without her?"

I ran out with Edwin, I opened the chaise door, I took Emmeline in my arms, I folded her to my heart. She was wrapped in soft white fur, like the snowy landscape: but was warm, and young, and lovely. I put their leaders to with my own hands, I gave the boys a five-pound note apiece, I cheered them as they drove away, I drove the other way myself as hard as I could pelt.

I never went to Liverpool, I never went to America, I went straight back to London, and I married Angela. I have never until this time, even

to her, disclosed the secret of my character, and the mistrust and mistaken journey into which it led me. When she, and they, and our eight children and their seven—I mean Edwin's and Emmeline's, whose eldest girl is old enough now to wear white for herself, and to look very like her mother in it—come to read these pages, as of course they will, I shall hardly fail to be found out at last. Never mind! I can bear it. I began at the Holly-Tree, by idle accident to associate the Christmas-time of year with human interest, and with some inquiry into, and some care for, the lives of those by whom I find myself surrounded. I hope that I am none the worse for it, and that no one near me or afar off is the worse for it. And I say, may the green Holly-Tree flourish, striking its roots deep into our English ground, and having its germinating qualities carried by the birds of heaven all over the world!

The Wreck of the "Golden
Mary."

The Wreck of the "Golden Mary."

THE WRECK.

I WAS apprenticed to the sea when I was twelve years old, and I have encountered a great deal of rough weather, both literal and metaphorical. It has always been my opinion, since I first possessed such a thing as an opinion, that the man who knows only one subject is next tiresome to the man who knows no subject. Therefore, in the course of my life I have taught myself whatever I could, and although I am not an educated man, I am able, I am thankful to say, to have an intelligent interest in most things.

A person might suppose, from reading the above, that I am in the habit of holding forth about number one. That is not the case. Just as if I was to come into a room among strangers, and must either be introduced or introduce myself, so I have taken the liberty of passing these few remarks, simply and plainly, that it may be known who and what I am. I will add no more of the sort than that my name is William George Ravender, that I was born at Penrith half a year after my own father was drowned, and that I am, on the second day of this present blessed Christmas week of one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, fifty-six years of age.

When the rumour first went flying up and down that there was gold in California—which, as most people know, was before it was discovered in the

British colony of Australia—I was in the West Indies, trading among the islands. Being in command and likewise part-owner of a smart schooner, I had my work cut out for me, and I was doing it. Consequently, gold in California was no business of mine.

But, by the time when I came home to England again, the thing was as clear as your hand held up before you at noon-day. There was Californian gold in the museums and in the goldsmiths' shops, and the very first time I went upon 'Change, I met a friend of mine (a seafaring man like myself) with a Californian nugget hanging to his watch-chain. I handled it. It was as like a peeled walnut with bits unevenly broken off here and there, and then electrotyped all over, as ever I saw anything in my life.

I am a single man (she was too good for this world and for me, and she died six weeks before our marriage-day), so when I am ashore, I live in my house at Poplar. My house at Poplar is taken care of and kept ship-shape by an old lady who was my mother's maid before I was born. She is as handsome and as upright as any old lady in the world. She is as fond of me as if she had ever had an only son, and I was he. Well do I know wherever I sail that she never lays down her head at night without having said, "Merciful Lord! bless and preserve William George Ravender, and send him safe home, through Christ our Saviour!" I have thought of it in many a dangerous moment, when it has done me no harm, I am sure.

In my house at Poplar, along with this old lady, I lived quiet for best part of a year; having had a long spell of it among the islands, and having (which was very uncommon in me) taken the fever rather

badly. At last, being strong and hearty, and having read every book I could lay hold of, right out, I was walking down Leadenhall Street, in the city of London, thinking of turning-to again, when I met what I call Smithick and Watersby of Liverpool. I chanced to lift up my eyes from looking in at a ship's chronometer in a window, and I saw him bearing down upon me, head on.

It is, personally, neither Smithick nor Watersby that I here mention, nor was I ever acquainted with any man of either of those names, nor do I think that there has been any one of either of those names in that Liverpool house for years back. But it is in reality the house itself that I refer to; and a wiser merchant or a truer gentleman never stepped.

"My dear Captain Ravender," says he. "Of all the men on earth, I wanted to see you most. I was on my way to you."

"Well!" says I. "That looks as if you *were* to see me, don't it?" With that I put my arm in his, and we walked on towards the Royal Exchange, and when we got there, walked up and down at the back of it where the clock-tower is. We walked an hour and more, for he had much to say to me. He had a scheme for chartering a new ship of their own to take out cargo to the diggers and emigrants in California, and to buy and bring back gold. Into the particulars of that scheme I will not enter, and I have no right to enter. All I say of it is, that it was a very original one, a very fine one, a very sound one, and a very lucrative one beyond doubt.

He imparted it to me as freely as if I had been a part

of himself. After doing so, he made me the handsomest sharing offer that ever was made to me, boy or man—or I believe to any other captain in the merchant navy—and he took this round turn to finish with—

"Ravender, you are well aware that the lawlessness of that coast and country, at present, is as special as the circumstances in which it is placed. Crews of vessels outward-bound desert as soon as they make the land; crews of vessels homeward-bound ship at enormous wages, with the express intention of murdering the captain and seizing the gold freight; no man can trust another, and the devil seems let loose. Now," says he, "you know my opinion of you, and you know I am only expressing it, and with no singularity, when I tell you that you are almost the only man on whose integrity, discretion, and energy—" etc., etc. For I don't want to repeat what he said, though I was and am sensible of it.

Notwithstanding my being, as I have mentioned, quite ready for a voyage, still I had some doubts of this voyage. Of course I knew, without being told, that there were peculiar difficulties and dangers in it, a long way over and above those which attend all voyages. It must not be supposed that I was afraid to face them; but, in my opinion, a man has no manly motive or sustainment in his own breast for facing dangers unless he has well considered what they are, and is able quietly to say to himself, "None of these perils can now take me by surprise; I shall know what to do for the best in any of them; all the rest lie in the higher and greater hands to which I humbly commit myself." On this principle I have so attentively considered (regarding it as my duty) all the

hazards I have ever been able to think of, in the ordinary way of storm, shipwreck, and fire at sea, that I hope I should be prepared to do, in any of those cases, whatever could be done, to save the lives intrusted to my charge.

As I was thoughtful, my good friend proposed that he should leave me to walk there as long as I liked, and that I should dine with him by and by at his club in Pall Mall. I accepted the invitation, and I walked up and down there, quarter-deck fashion, a matter of a couple of hours; now and then looking up at the weathercock as I might have looked up aloft; and now and then taking a look into Cornhill, as I might have taken a look over the side.

All dinner-time, and all after dinner-time, we talked it over again. I gave him my views of his plan, and he very much approved of the same. I told him I had nearly decided, but not quite. "Well, well," says he, "come down to Liverpool to-morrow with me, and see the 'Golden Mary.'" I liked the name (her name was Mary, and she was golden, if golden stands for good), so I began to feel that it was almost done when I said I would go to Liverpool. On the next morning but one we were on board the "Golden Mary." I might have known, from his asking me to come down and see her, what she was. I declare her to have been the completest and most exquisite beauty that ever I set my eyes upon.

We had inspected every timber in her, and had come back to the gangway to go ashore from the dock-basin, when I put out my hand to my friend. "Touch upon it," says I, "and touch heartily. I take command of this ship, and I am hers and

yours, if I can get John Steadiman for my chief mate."

John Steadiman had sailed with me four voyages. The first voyage John was third mate out to China, and came home second. The other three voyages he was my first officer. At this time of chartering the "Golden Mary," he was aged thirty-two. A brisk, bright, blue-eyed fellow, a very neat figure and rather under the middle size, never out of the way and never in it, a face that pleased everybody and that all children took to, a habit of going about singing as cheerily as a blackbird, and a perfect sailor.

We were in one of those Liverpool hackney-coaches in less than a minute, and we cruised about in her upwards of three hours, looking for John. John had come home from Van Diemen's land barely a month before, and I had heard of him as taking a frisk in Liverpool. We asked after him, among many other places, at the two boarding-houses he was fondest of, and we found he had had a week's spell at each of them; but he had gone here and gone there, and had set off "to lay out on the main-to'-gallant-yard of the highest Welsh mountain" (so he had told the people of the house), and where he might be then, or when he might come back, nobody could tell us. But it was surprising, to be sure, to see how every face brightened the moment there was mention made of the name of Mr. Steadiman.

We were taken aback at meeting with no better luck, and we had wore ship and put her head for my friends, when, as we were jogging through the streets, I clap my eyes on John himself coming out of





s.s. "They was n even deep at the keyhole." Pa

a toy-shop! He was carrying a little boy, and conducting two uncommon pretty women to their coach, and he told me afterwards that he had never in his life seen one of the three before, but that he was so taken with them on looking in at the toy-shop while they were buying the child a cranky Noah's ark, very much down by the head, that he had gone in and asked the ladies' permission to treat him to a tolerably correct cutter there was in the window, in order that such a handsome boy might not grow up with a lubberly idea of naval architecture.

We stood off and on until the ladies' coachman began to give way, and then we hailed John. On his coming aboard of us, I told him, very gravely, what I had said to my friend. It struck him, as he said himself, amidships. He was quite shaken by it. "Captain Ravender," were John Steadiman's words, "such an opinion from you is true commendation, and I'll sail round the world with you for twenty years if you hoist the signal, and stand by you for ever!" And now indeed I felt that it was done, and that the "Golden Mary" was afloat.

Grass never grew yet under the feet of Smithick and Watersby. The riggers were out of that ship in a fortnight's time, and we had begun taking in cargo. John was always aboard, seeing everything stowed with his own eyes; and whenever I went aboard myself, early or late, whether he was below in the hold, or on deck at the hatchway, or overhauling his cabin, nailing up pictures in it of the Blush Roses of England, the Blue Belles of Scotland, and the female Shamrock of Ireland, of a certainty I heard John singing like a blackbird.

We had room for twenty passengers. Our sailing advertisement was no sooner out, than we might have taken these twenty times over. In entering our men, I and John (both together) picked them, and we entered none but good hands—as good as were to be found in that port. And so, in a good ship of the best build, well owned, well arranged, well officered, well manned, well found in all respects, we parted with our pilot at a quarter past four o'clock in the afternoon of the seventh of March, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, and stood with a fair wind out to sea.

It may be easily believed that up to that time I had had no leisure to be intimate with my passengers. The most of them were then in their berths sea-sick; however, in going among them, telling them what was good for them, persuading them not to be there, but to come up on deck and feel the breeze, and in rousing them with a joke, or a comfortable word, I made acquaintance with them, perhaps, in a more friendly and confidential way from the first, than I might have done at the cabin-table.

Of my passengers, I need only particularise, just at present, a bright-eyed, blooming young wife who was going out to join her husband in California, taking with her their only child, a little girl of three years old, whom he had never seen; a sedate young woman in black, some five years older (about thirty, as I should say), who was going out to join a brother; and an old gentleman, a good deal like a hawk if his eyes had been better and not so red, who was always talking, morning, noon, and night, about the gold discovery. But whether he was making the voyage,

thinking his old arms could dig for gold, or whether his speculation was to buy it, or to barter for it, or to cheat for it, or to snatch it anyhow from other people, was his secret. He kept his secret.

These three and the child were the soonest well. The child was a most engaging child, to be sure,* and very fond of me, though I am bound to admit that John Steadiman and I were borne on her pretty little books in reverse order, and that he was captain there, and I was mate. It was beautiful to watch her with John, and it was beautiful to watch John with her. Few would have thought it possible, to see John playing at bo-peep round the mast, that he was the man who had caught up an iron bar and struck a Malay and a Maltese dead, as they were gliding with their knives down the cabin stair aboard the barque "Old England," when the captain lay ill in his cot, off Saugar Point. But he was ; and give him his back against a bulwark, he would have done the same by half a dozen of them. The name of the young mother was Mrs. Atherfield, the name of the young lady in black was Miss Coleshaw, and the name of the old gentleman was Mr. Rarx.

As the child had a quantity of shining fair hair, clustering in curls all about her face, and as her name was Lucy, Steadiman gave her the name of the golden Lucy. So we had the golden Lucy and the "Golden Mary" ; and John kept up the idea to that extent as he and the child went playing about the decks, that I believe she used to think the ship was alive somehow—a sister or companion, going to the same place as herself. She liked to be by the wheel, and, in fine weather, I have often stood by the man whose trick

it was at the wheel, only to hear her, sitting near my feet, talking to the ship. Never had a child such a doll before, I suppose; but she made a doll of the "Golden Mary," and used to dress her up by tying ribbons and little bits of finery to the belaying-pins; and nobody ever moved them, unless it was to save them from being blown away.

Of course I took charge of the two young women, and I called them "my dear," and they never minded, knowing that whatever I said was said in a fatherly and protecting spirit. I gave them their places on each side of me at dinner—Mrs. Atherfield on my right and Miss Coleshaw on my left; and I directed the unmarried lady to serve out the breakfast, and the married lady to serve out the tea. Likewise I said to my black steward in their presence, "Tom Snow, these two ladies are equally the mistresses of this house, and do you obey their orders equally;" at which Tom laughed, and they all laughed.

Old Mr. Rarx was not a pleasant man to look at, nor yet to talk to, or to be with, for no one could help seeing that he was a sordid and selfish character, and that he had warped further and further out of the straight with time. Not but what he was on his best behaviour with us, as everybody was; for we had no bickering among us, for'ard or aft. I only mean to say, he was not the man one would have chosen for a messmate. If choice there had been, one might even have gone a few points out of one's course, to say, "No! Not him!" But there was one curious inconsistency in Mr. Rarx. That was, that he took an astonishing interest in the child. He looked, and, I may add, he was, one of the last of men to care at

all for a child, or to care much for any human creature. Still, he went so far as to be habitually uneasy if the child was long on deck out of his sight. He was always afraid of her falling overboard, or falling down a hatchway, or of a block or what not coming down upon her from the rigging in the working of the ship, or of her getting some hurt or other. He used to look at her and touch her, as if she was something precious to him. He was always solicitous about her not injuring her health, and constantly entreated her mother to be careful of it. This was so much the more curious, because the child did not like him, but used to shrink away from him, and would not even put out her hand to him without coaxing from others. I believe that every soul on board frequently noticed this, and not one of us understood it. However, it was such a plain fact, that John Steadiman said more than once when old Mr. Rarx was not within earshot, that if the "Golden Mary" felt a tenderness for the dear old gentleman she carried in her lap, she must be bitterly jealous of the golden Lucy.

Before I go any further with this narrative, I will state that our ship was a barque of three hundred tons, carrying a crew of eighteen men, a second mate in addition to John, a carpenter, an armourer or smith, and two apprentices (one a Scotch boy, poor little fellow!). We had three boats; the long-boat, capable of carrying twenty-five men; the cutter, capable of carrying fifteen; and the surf-boat, capable of carrying ten. I put down the capacity of these boats according to the numbers they were really meant to hold.

We had tastes of bad weather and head-winds, of

course ; but, on the whole, we had as fine a run as any reasonable man could expect, for sixty days. I then began to enter two remarks in the ship's log and in my journal ; first, there was an unusual and amazing quantity of ice ; second, that the nights were most wonderfully dark, in spite of the ice.

For five days and a half, it seemed quite useless and hopeless to alter the ship's course so as to stand out of the way of this ice. I made what southing I could ; but, all that time, we were beset by it. Mrs. Atherfield, after standing by me on deck once, looking for some time in an awed manner at the great 'bergs that surrounded us, said in a whisper, " Oh, Captain Ravender, it looks as if the whole solid earth had changed into ice, and broken up ! " I said to her, laughing, " I don't wonder that it does, to your inexperienced eyes, my dear. " But I had never seen a twentieth part of the quantity, and, in reality, I was pretty much of her opinion.

However, at 2 p.m. on the afternoon of the sixth day, that is to say, when we were sixty-six days out, John Steadiman, who had gone aloft, sang out from the top that the sea was clear ahead. Before 4 p.m., a strong breeze springing up right astern, we were in open water at sunset. The breeze then freshening into half a gale of wind, and the " Golden Mary " being a very fast sailer, we went before the wind merrily all night.

I had thought it impossible that it could be darker than it had been, until the sun, moon, and stars should fall out of the heavens, and time should be destroyed ; but it had been next to light in comparison with what it was now. The darkness was so

profound, that looking into it was painful and oppressive—like looking, without a ray of light, into a dense black bandage put as close before the eyes as it could be, without touching them. I doubled the look-out, and John and I stood in the bow side by side, never leaving it all night. Yet I should no more have known that he was near me when he was silent, without putting out my arm and touching him, than I should if he had turned in and been fast asleep below. We were not so much looking out, all of us, as listening to the utmost, both with our eyes and ears.

Next day, I found that the mercury in the barometer, which had risen steadily since we cleared the ice, remained steady. I had had very good observations, with now and then the interruption of a day or so, since our departure. I got the sun at noon, and found that we were in lat. 58° S., long. 60° W., off New South Shetland, in the neighbourhood of Cape Horn. We were sixty-seven days out, that day. The ship's reckoning was accurately worked and made up. The ship did her duty admirably, all on board were well, and all hands were as smart, efficient, and contented, as it was possible to be.

When the night came on again as dark as before, it was the eighth night I had been on deck. Nor had I taken more than a very little sleep in the daytime, my station being always near the helm, and often at it, while we were among the ice. Few but those who have tried it can imagine the difficulty and pain of only keeping the eyes open—physically open—under such circumstances, in such darkness. They get struck by the darkness, and blinded by the darkness.

They make patterns in it, and they flash in it, as if they had gone out of your head to look at you. On the turn of midnight, John Steadiman, who was alert and fresh (for I had always made him turn in by day), said to me, "Captain Ravender, I entreat of you to go below. I am sure you can hardly stand, and your voice is getting weak, sir. Go below, and take a little rest. I'll call you if a block chafes." I said to John in answer, "Well, well, John! Let us wait till the turn of one o'clock before we talk about that." I had just had one of the ship's lanterns held up, that I might see how the night went by my watch, and it was then twenty minutes after twelve.

At five minutes before one, John sang out to the boy to bring the lantern again, and when I told him once more what the time was, entreated and prayed of me to go below. "Captain Ravender," says he, "all's well; we can't afford to have you laid up for a single hour; and I respectfully and earnestly beg of you to go below." The end of it was, that I agreed to do so, on the understanding that if I failed to come up of my own accord within three hours, I was to be punctually called. Having settled that, I left John in charge. But I called him to me once afterwards, to ask him a question. I had been to look at the barometer, and had seen the mercury still perfectly steady, and had come up the companion again to take a last look about me—if I can use such a word in reference to such darkness—when I thought that the waves, as the "Golden Mary" parted them and shook them off, had a hollow sound in them; something that I fancied was a rather unusual reverberation. I was standing by the quarter-deck rail on the

starboard side, when I called John aft to me, and bade him listen. He did so with the greatest attention. Turning to me he then said, "Rely upon it, Captain Ravender, you have been without rest too long, and the novelty is only in the state of your sense of hearing." I thought so too by that time, and I think so now, though I can never know for absolute certain in this world whether it was or not.

When I left John Steadiman in charge, the ship was still going at a great rate through the water. The wind still blew right astern. Though she was making great way, she was under shortened sail, and had no more than she could easily carry. All was snug, and nothing complained. There was a pretty sea running, but not a very high sea neither, nor at all a confused one.

I turned in, as we seamen say, all standing. The meaning of that is, I did not pull my clothes off—no, not even so much as my coat: though I did my shoes, for my feet were badly swelled with the deck. There was a little swing-lamp alight in my cabin. I thought, as I looked at it before shutting my eyes, that I was so tired of darkness, and troubled by darkness, that I could have gone to sleep best in the midst of a million of flaming gaslights. That was the last thought I had before I went off, except the prevailing thought that I should not be able to get to sleep at all.

I dreamed that I was back at Penrith again, and was trying to get round the church, which had altered its shape very much since I last saw it, and was cloven all down the middle of the steeple in a most singular manner. Why I wanted to get round the church I don't know; but I was as anxious to do it as if my

life depended on it. Indeed, I believe it did in the dream. For all that, I could not get round the church. I was still trying, when I came against it with a violent shock, and was flung out of my cot against the ship's side. Shrieks and a terrific outcry struck me far harder than the bruising timbers, and, amidst sounds of grinding and crashing, and a heavy rushing and breaking of water—sounds I understood too well—I made my way on deck. It was not an easy thing to do, for the ship heeled over frightfully, and was beating in a furious manner.

I could not see the men as I went forward, but I could hear that they were hauling in sail, in disorder. I had my trumpet in my hand, and, after directing and encouraging them in this till it was done, I hailed first John Steadiman, and then my second mate, Mr. William Rames. Both answered clearly and steadily. Now, I had practised them and all my crew, as I have ever made it a custom to practise all who sail with me, to take certain stations and wait my orders, in case of any unexpected crisis. When my voice was heard hailing, and their voices were heard answering, I was aware, through all the noises of the ship and sea, and all the crying of the passengers below, that there was a pause. "Are you ready, Rames?"—"Ay, ay, sir!"—"Then light up, for God's sake!" In a moment he and another were burning blue-lights, and the ship and all on board seemed to be inclosed in a mist of light, under a great black dome.

The light shone up so high that I could see the huge iceberg upon which we had struck, cloven at the top and down the middle, exactly like Penrith Church in my dream. At the same moment I could see

the watch last relieved, crowding up and down on deck ; I could see Mrs. Atherfield and Miss Coleshaw thrown about on the top of the companion as they struggled to bring the child up from below ; I could see that the masts were going with the shock and the beating of the ship ; I could see the frightful breach stove in on the starboard side, half the length of the vessel, and the sheathing and timbers spirting up ; I could see that the cutter was disabled, in a wreck of broken fragments ; and I could see every eye turned upon me. It is my belief that if there had been ten thousand eyes there, I should have seen them all, with their different looks. And all this in a moment. But you must consider what a moment.

I saw the men, as they looked at me, fall towards their appointed stations, like good men and true. If she had not righted, they could have done very little there or anywhere but die—not that it is little for a man to die at his post—I mean they could have done nothing to save the passengers and themselves. Happily, however, the violence of the shock with which we had so determinedly borne down direct on that fatal iceberg, as if it had been our destination instead of our destruction, had so smashed and pounded the ship that she got off in this same instant and righted. I did not want the carpenter to tell me she was filling and going down ; I could see and hear that. I gave Rames the word to lower the long-boat and the surf-boat, and I myself told off the men for each duty. Not one hung back, or came before the other. I now whispered to John Steadiman, "John, I stand at the gangway here, to see every soul on board safe over the side. You shall have the next post of

honour, and shall be the last but one to leave the ship. Bring up the passengers, and range them behind me; and put what provision and water you can get at in the boats. Cast your eye for'ard, John, and you'll see you have not a moment to lose."

My noble fellows got the boats over the side as orderly as I ever saw boats lowered with any sea running, and, when they were launched, two or three of the nearest men in them as they held on, rising and falling with the swell, called out, looking up at me, "Captain Ravender, if anything goes wrong with us, and you are saved, remember we stood by you!"—"We'll all stand by one another ashore, yet, please God, my lads!" says I. "Hold on bravely, and be tender with the women."

The women were an example to us. They trembled very much, but they were quiet and perfectly collected. "Kiss me, Captain Ravender," says Mrs. Atherfield, "and God in heaven bless you, you good man!" "My dear," says I, "those words are better for me than a lifeboat." I held her child in my arms till she was in the boat, and then kissed the child and handed her safe down. I now said to the people in her, "You have got your freight, my lads, all but me, and I am not coming yet awhile. Pull away from the ship, and keep off!"

That was the long-boat. Old Mr. Rarx was one of her complement, and he was the only passenger who had greatly misbehaved since the ship struck. Others had been a little wild, which was not to be wondered at, and not very blameable; but he had made a lamentation and uproar which it was dangerous for the people to hear, as there is always contagion in weakness and selfishness. His incessant cry had been

that he must not be separated from the child, that he couldn't see the child, and that he and the child must go together. He had even tried to wrest the child out of my arms, that he might keep her in his. "Mr. Rarx," said I to him when it came to that, "I have a loaded pistol in my pocket, and if you don't stand out of the gangway, and keep perfectly quiet, I shall shoot you through the heart, if you have got one." Says he, "You won't do murder, Captain Ravender!" "No, sir," says I, "I won't murder forty-four people to humour you, but I'll shoot you to save them." After that he was quiet, and stood shivering a little way off, until I named him to go over the side.

The long-boat being cast off, the surf-boat was soon filled. There only remained aboard the "Golden Mary," John Mullion, the man who had kept on burning the blue-lights (and who had lighted every new one at every old one before it went out, as quietly as if he had been at an illumination), John Steadiman, and myself. I hurried those two into the surf-boat, called to them to keep off, and waited with a grateful and relieved heart for the long-boat to come and take me in, if she could. I looked at my watch, and it showed me, by the blue-light, ten minutes past two. They lost no time. As soon as she was near enough, I swung myself into her, and called to the men, "With a will, lads! She's reeling!" We were not an inch too far out of the inner vortex of her going down, when, by the blue-light which John Mullion still burned in the bow of the surf-boat, we saw her lurch, and plunge to the bottom head-foremost. The child cried, weeping wildly, "Oh, the dear 'Golden Mary'! Oh, look at her! Save her! Save the poor 'Golden

Mary'!" And then the light burned out, and the black dome seemed to come down upon us.

I suppose if we had all stood a-top of a mountain, and seen the whole remainder of the world sink away from under us, we could hardly have felt more shocked and solitary than we did when we knew we were alone on the wide ocean, and that the beautiful ship in which most of us had been securely asleep within half an hour was gone for ever. There was an awful silence in our boat, and such a kind of palsy on the rowers and the man at the rudder, that I felt they were scarcely keeping her before the sea. I spoke out then, and said, "Let every one here thank the Lord for our preservation!" All the voices answered (even the child's), "We thank the Lord!" I then said the Lord's Prayer, and all hands said it after me with a solemn murmuring. Then I gave the word, "Cheerily, oh, men, cheerily!" and I felt that they were handling the boat again as a boat ought to be handled.

The surf-boat now burned another blue-light to show us where they were, and we made for her, and laid ourselves as nearly alongside of her as we dared. I had always kept my boats with a coil or two of good stout stuff in each of them, so both boats had a rope at hand. We made a shift, with much labour and trouble, to get near enough to one another to divide the blue-lights (they were no use after that night, for the sea-water soon got at them), and to get a tow-rope out between us. All night long we kept together, sometimes obliged to cast off the rope, and sometimes getting it out again, and all of us wearying for the morning,

which appeared so long in coming that old Mr. Rarx screamed out, in spite of his fears of me, "The world is drawing to an end, and the sun will never rise any more!"

When the day broke, I found that we were all huddled together in a miserable manner. We were deep in the water; being, as I found on mustering, thirty-one in number, or at least six too many. In the surf-boat they were fourteen in number, being at least four too many. The first thing I did was to get myself passed to the rudder—which I took from that time—and to get Mrs. Atherfield, her child, and Miss Coleshaw, passed on to sit next me. As to old Mr. Rarx, I put him in the bow, as far from us as I could. And I put some of the best men near us in order that if I should drop there might be a skilful hand ready to take the helm.

The sea moderating as the sun came up, though the sky was cloudy and wild, we spoke the other boat, to know what stores they had, and to overhaul what we had. I had a compass in my pocket, a small telescope, a double-barrelled pistol, a knife, and a fire-box and matches. Most of my men had knives, and some had a little tobacco: some, a pipe as well. We had a mug among us, and an iron spoon. As to provisions, there were in my boat two bags of biscuit, one piece of raw beef, one piece of raw pork, a bag of coffee, roasted but not ground (thrown in, I imagine, by mistake for something else), two small casks of water, and about half a gallon of rum in a keg. The surf-boat having rather more rum than we, and fewer to drink it, gave us, as I estimated, another quart into our keg.

In return, we gave them three double handfuls of coffee, tied up in a piece of a handkerchief; they reported that they had aboard besides, a bag of biscuit, a piece of beef, a small cask of water, a small box of lemons, and a Dutch cheese. It took a long time to make these exchanges, and they were not made without risk to both parties; the sea running quite high enough to make our approaching near to one another very hazardous. In the bundle with the coffee, I conveyed to John Steadiman (who had a ship's compass with him), a paper written in pencil, and torn from my pocket-book, containing the course I meant to steer, in the hope of making land, or being picked up by some vessel—I say in the hope, though I had little hope of either deliverance. I then sang out to him, so as all might hear, that if we two boats could live or die together, we would; but that, if we should be parted by the weather, and join company no more, they should have our prayers and blessings, and we asked for theirs. We then gave them three cheers, which they returned, and I saw the men's heads droop in both boats as they fell to their oars again.

These arrangements had occupied the general attention advantageously for all, though (as I expressed in the last sentence) they ended in a sorrowful feeling. I now said a few words to my fellow-voyagers on the subject of the small stock of food on which our lives depended if they were preserved from the great deep, and on the rigid necessity of our eking it out in the most frugal manner. One and all replied that whatever allowance I thought best to lay down should be strictly



kept to. We made a pair of scales out of a thin scrap of iron-plating and some twine, and I got together for weights such of the heaviest buttons among us as I calculated made up some fractions over two ounces. This was the allowance of solid food served out once a day to each, from that time to the end; with the addition of a coffee-berry, or sometimes half a one, when the weather was very fair, for breakfast. We had nothing else whatever, but half a pint of water each per day, and sometimes, when we were coldest and weakest, a teaspoonful of rum each, served out as a dram. I know how learnedly it can be shown that rum is poison, but I also know that in this case, as in all similar cases I have ever read of—which are numerous—no words can express the comfort and support derived from it. Nor have I the least doubt that it saved the lives of far more than half our number. Having mentioned half a pint of water as our daily allowance, I ought to observe that sometimes we had less, and sometimes we had more; for much rain fell, and we caught it in a canvas stretched for the purpose.

Thus, at that tempestuous time of the year, and in that tempestuous part of the world, we shipwrecked people rose and fell with the waves. It is not my intention to relate (if I can avoid it) such circumstances appertaining to our doleful condition as have been better told in many other narratives of the kind than I can be expected to tell them. I will only note, in so many passing words, that day after day and night after night, we received the sea upon our backs to prevent it from swamping

the boat; that one party was always kept baling, and that every hat and cap among us soon got worn out, though patched up fifty times, as the only vessels we had for that service; that another party lay down in the bottom of the boat, while a third rowed; and that we were soon all in boils and blisters and rags.

The other boat was a source of such anxious interest to all of us that I used to wonder whether, if we were saved, the time could ever come when the survivors in this boat of ours could be at all indifferent to the fortunes of the survivors in that. We got out a tow-rope whenever the weather permitted, but that did not often happen, and how we two parties kept within the same horizon, as we did, He, who mercifully permitted it to be so for our consolation, only knows. I never shall forget the looks with which, when the morning light came, we used to gaze about us over the stormy waters for the other boat. We once parted company for seventy-two hours, and we believed them to have gone down, as they did us. The joy on both sides when we came within view of one another again had something in a manner divine in it; each was so forgetful of individual suffering, in tears of delight and sympathy for the people in the other boat.

I have been wanting to get round to the individual or personal part of my subject, as I call it, and the foregoing incident puts me in the right way. The patience and good disposition aboard of us was wonderful. I was not surprised by it in the women; for all men born of women know what great qualities

they will show when men will fail ; but I own I was a little surprised by it in some of the men. Among one-and-thirty people assembled at the best of times, there will usually, I should say, be two or three uncertain tempers. I knew that I had more than one rough temper with me among my own people, for I had chosen those for the long-boat that I might have them under my eye. But they softened under their misery, and were as considerate of the ladies, and as compassionate of the child, as the best among us, or among men—they could not have been more so. I heard scarcely any complaining. The party lying down would moan a good deal in their sleep, and I would often notice a man—not always the same man, it is to be understood, but nearly all of them at one time or other—sitting moaning at his oar, or in his place, as he looked mistily over the sea. When it happened to be long before I could catch his eye, he would go on moaning all the time in the dismallest manner ; but when our looks met, he would brighten and leave off. I almost always got the impression that he did not know what sound he had been making, but that he thought he had been humming a tune.

Our sufferings from cold and wet were far greater than our sufferings from hunger. We managed to keep the child warm ; but I doubt if any one else among us ever was warm for five minutes together ; and the shivering, and the chattering of teeth, were sad to hear. The child cried a little at first for her lost playfellow, the "Golden Mary" ; but hardly ever whimpered afterwards ; and when the state of the weather made it possible, she used now and then to

be held up in the arms of some of us, to look over the sea for John Steadiman's boat. I see the golden hair, and the innocent face now, between me and the driving clouds, like an angel going to fly away.

It had happened on the second day, towards night, that Mrs. Atherfield, in getting little Lucy to sleep, sang her a song. She had a soft, melodious voice, and, when she had finished it, our people up and begged for another. She sang them another, and after it had fallen dark ended with the evening hymn. From that time, whenever anything could be heard above the sea and wind, and while she had any voice left, nothing would serve the people but that she should sing at sunset. She always did, and always ended with the evening hymn. We mostly took up the last line, and shed tears when it was done, but not miserably. We had a prayer night and morning also, when the weather allowed of it.

Twelve nights and eleven days we had been driving in the boat, when old Mr. Rarx began to be delirious, and to cry out to me to throw the gold overboard or it would sink us, and we should all be lost. For days past the child had been declining, and that was the great cause of his wildness. He had been over and over again shrieking out to me to give her all the remaining meat, to give her all the remaining rum, to save her at any cost, or we should all be ruined. At this time, she lay in her mother's arms at my feet. One of her little hands was almost always creeping about her mother's neck or chin. I had watched the wasting of the little hand, and I knew it was nearly over.

The old man's cries were so discordant with the

mother's love and submission, that I called out to him in an angry voice, unless he held his peace on the instant, I would order him to be knocked on the head and thrown overboard. He was mute then, until the child died, very peacefully, an hour afterwards; which was known to all in the boat by the mother's breaking out into lamentations for the first time since the wreck—for she had great fortitude and constancy, though she was a little gentle woman. Old Mr. Rarx then became quite ungovernable, tearing what rags he had on him, raging in imprecations, and calling to me that if I had thrown the gold overboard (always the gold with him!) I might have saved the child. "And now," says he, in a terrible voice, "we shall founder, and all go to the devil, for our sins will sink us when we have no innocent child to bear us up!" We so discovered with amazement, that this old wretch had only cared for the life of the pretty little creature dear to all of us, because of the influence he superstitiously hoped she might have in preserving him! Altogether it was too much for the smith or armourer, who was sitting next the old man, to bear. He took him by the throat and rolled him under the thwarts, where he lay still enough for hours afterwards.

All that thirteenth night, Miss Coleshaw, lying across my knees as I kept the helm, comforted and supported the poor mother. Her child, covered with a pea-jacket of mine, lay in her lap. It troubled me all night to think that there was no Prayer Book among us, and that I could remember but very few of the exact words of the burial service. When I stood up at broad day, all knew what was going

to be done, and I noticed that my poor fellows made the motion of uncovering their heads, though their heads had been stark bare to the sky and sea for many a weary hour. There was a long, heavy swell on, but otherwise it was a fair morning, and there were broad fields of sunlight on the waves in the east. I said no more than this: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He raised the daughter of Jairus the ruler, and said she was not dead but slept. He raised the widow's son. He arose Himself, and was seen of many. He loved little children, saying, Suffer them to come unto Me and rebuke them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. In His name, my friends, and committed to His merciful goodness!" With those words I laid my rough face softly on the placid little forehead, and buried the golden Lucy in the grave of the "Golden Mary."

Having had it on my mind to relate the end of this dear little child, I have omitted something from its exact place, which I will supply here. It will come quite as well here as anywhere else.

Foreseeing that if the boat lived through the stormy weather, the time must come, and soon come, when we should have absolutely no morsel to eat, I had one momentous point often in my thoughts. Although I had, years before that, fully satisfied myself that the instances in which human beings in the last distress have fed upon each other are exceedingly few, and have very seldom indeed (if ever) occurred when the people in distress, however dreadful their extremity, have been accustomed to moderate forbearance and restraint—I say, though I had long before quite

satisfied my mind on this topic, I felt doubtful whether there might not have been in former cases some harm and danger from keeping it out of sight and pretending not to think of it. I felt doubtful whether some minds, growing weak with fasting and exposure and having such a terrific idea to dwell upon in secret, might not magnify it until it got to have an awful attraction about it. This was not a new thought of mine, for it had grown out of my reading. However, it came over me stronger than it had ever done before—as it had reason for doing—in the boat, and on the fourth day I decided that I would bring out into the light that unformed fear which must have been more or less darkly in every brain among us. Therefore, as a means of beguiling the time and inspiring hope, I gave them the best summary in my power of Bligh's voyage of more than three thousand miles, in an open boat, after the mutiny of the "Bounty," and of the wonderful preservation of that boat's crew. They listened throughout with great interest, and I concluded by telling them that, in my opinion, the happiest circumstance in the whole narrative was, that Bligh, who was no delicate man either, had solemnly placed it on record therein that he was sure and certain that under no conceivable circumstances whatever would that emaciated party, who had gone through all the pains of famine, have preyed on one another. I cannot describe the visible relief which this spread through the boat, and how the tears stood in every eye. From that time I was as well convinced as Bligh himself that there was no danger, and that this phantom, at any rate, did not haunt us.

Now, it was a part of Bligh's experience that when the people in his boat were most cast down, nothing did them so much good as hearing a story told by one of their number. When I mentioned that, I saw that it struck the general attention as much as it did my own, for I had not thought of it until I came to it in my summary. This was on the day after Mrs. Atherfield first sang to us. I proposed that, whenever the weather would permit, we should have a story two hours after dinner (I always issued the allowance I have mentioned at one o'clock, and called it by that name), as well as our song at sunset. The proposal was received with a cheerful satisfaction that warmed my heart within me; and I do not say too much when I say that those two periods in the four-and-twenty hours were expected with positive pleasure, and were really enjoyed by all hands. Spectres as we soon were in our bodily wasting, our imaginations did not perish like the gross flesh upon our bones. Music and adventure, two of the great gifts of Providence to mankind, could charm us long after that was lost.

The wind was almost always against us after the second day; and for many days together we could not nearly hold our own. We had all varieties of bad weather. We had rain, hail, snow, wind, mist, thunder, and lightning. Still the boats lived through the heavy seas, and still we perishing people rose and fell with the great waves.

Sixteen nights and fifteen days, twenty nights and nineteen days, twenty-four nights and twenty-three days. So the time went on. Disheartening as I knew that our progress, or want of progress, must

be, I never deceived them as to my calculations of it. In the first place, I felt that we were all too near eternity for deceit; in the second place, I knew that if I failed, or died, the man who followed me must have a knowledge of the true state of things to begin upon. When I told them at noon what I reckoned we had made or lost, they generally received what I said in a tranquil and resigned manner, and always gratefully towards me. It was not unusual at any time of the day for some one to burst out weeping loudly without any new cause; and, when the burst was over, to calm down a little better than before. I had seen exactly the same thing in a house of mourning.

During the whole of this time, old Mr. Rarx had had his fits of calling out to me to throw the gold (always the gold!) overboard, and of heaping violent reproaches upon me for not having saved the child; but now, the food being all gone, and I having nothing left to serve out but a bit of coffee-berry now and then, he began to be too weak to do this, and consequently fell silent. Mrs. Atherfield and Miss Coleshaw generally lay, each with an arm across one of my knees, and her head upon it. They never complained at all. Up to the time of her child's death, Mrs. Atherfield had bound up her own beautiful hair every day; and I took particular notice that this was always before she sang her song at night, when every one looked at her. But she never did it after the loss of her darling; and it would have been now all tangled with dirt and wet, but that Miss Coleshaw was careful of it long after she was herself, and would sometimes smooth it down with her weak thin hands.

We were past mustering a story now; but one day, at about this period, I reverted to the superstition of old Mr. Rarx, concerning the golden Lucy, and told them that nothing vanished from the eye of God, though much might pass away from the eyes of men. "We were all of us," says I, "children once; and our baby feet have strolled in green woods ashore; and our baby hands have gathered flowers in gardens, where the birds were singing. The children that we were are not lost to the great knowledge of our Creator. Those innocent creatures will appear with us before Him, and plead for us. What we were in the best time of our generous youth will arise and go with us too. The purest part of our lives will not desert us at the pass to which all of us here present are gliding. What we were then will be as much in existence before Him as what we are now." They were no less comforted by this consideration than I was myself; and Miss Coleshaw, drawing my ear nearer to her lips, said, "Captain Ravender, I was on my way to marry a disgraced and broken man, whom I dearly loved when he was honourable and good. Your words seem to have come out of my own poor heart." She pressed my hand upon it, smiling.

Twenty-seven nights and twenty-six days. We were in no want of rain-water, but we had nothing else. And yet, even now, I never turned my eyes upon a waking face but it tried to brighten before mine. Oh, what a thing it is, in a time of danger and in the presence of death, the shining of a face upon a face! I have heard it broached that orders should be given in great new ships by electric

telegraph. I admire machinery as much as any man, and am as thankful to it as any man can be for what it does for us. But it will never be a substitute for the face of a man, with his soul in it, encouraging another man to be brave and true. Never try it for that. It will break down like a STEAM.

I now began to remark certain changes in myself which I did not like. They caused me much disquiet. I often saw the golden Lucy in the air above the boat. I often saw her I have spoken of before, sitting beside me. I saw the "Golden Mary" go down, as she really had gone down, twenty times in a day. And yet the sea was mostly, to my thinking, not sea neither, but moving country and extraordinary mountainous regions, the like of which have never been beheld. I felt it time to leave my last words regarding John Steadiman, in case any lips should last out to repeat them to any living ears. I said that John had told me (as he had on deck) that he had sung out "Breakers ahead!" the instant they were audible, and had tried to wear ship, but she struck before it could be done. (His cry, I dare say, had made my dream.) I said that the circumstances were altogether without warning, and out of any course that could have been guarded against; that the same loss would have happened if I had been in charge; and that John was not to blame, but from first to last had done his duty nobly, like the man he was. I tried to write it down in my pocket-book, but could make no words, though I knew what the words were that I wanted to make. When it had come to that, her hands—though she was dead so long—laid me down

gently in the bottom of the boat, and she and the golden Lucy swung me to sleep.

All that follows, was written by John Steadiman, Chief Mate :

On the twenty-sixth day after the foundering of the "Golden Mary" at sea, I, John Steadiman, was sitting in my place in the stern-sheets of the surf-boat, with just sense enough left in me to steer—that is to say, with my eyes strained, wide-awake, over the bows of the boat, and my brains fast asleep and dreaming—when I was roused upon a sudden by our second mate, Mr. William Rames.

"Let me take a spell in your place," says he. "And look out for the long-boat astern. The last time she rose on the crest of a wave, I thought I made out a signal flying aboard her."

We shifted our places, clumsily and slowly enough, for we were both of us weak and dazed with wet, cold, and hunger. I waited some time, watching the heavy rollers astern, before the long-boat rose atop of one of them at the same time with us. At last, she was heaved up for a moment well in view, and there, sure enough, was the signal flying aboard of her—a strip of rag of some sort, rigged to an oar, and hoisted in her bows.

"What does it mean?" says Rames to me in a quavering, trembling sort of voice. "Do they signal a sail in sight?"

"Hush, for God's sake!" says I, clapping my hand over his mouth. "Don't let the people hear you. They'll all go mad together if we mislead them

about that signal. Wait a bit, till I have another look at it."

I held on by him, for he had set me all of a tremble with his notion of a sail in sight, and watched for the long-boat again. Up she rose on the top of another roller. I made out the signal clearly, that second time, and saw that it was rigged half-mast high.

"Rames," says I, "it's a signal of distress. Pass the word forward to keep her before the sea, and no more. We must get the long-boat within hailing distance of us, as soon as possible."

I dropped down into my old place at the tiller without another word—for the thought went through me like a knife that something had happened to Captain Ravender. I should consider myself unworthy to write another line of this statement, if I had not made up my mind to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and I must, therefore, confess plainly that now, for the first time, my heart sank within me. This weakness on my part was produced in some degree, as I take it, by the exhausting effects of previous anxiety and grief.

Our provisions—if I may give that name to what we had left—were reduced to the rind of one lemon and about a couple of handfuls of coffee-berries. Besides these great distresses, caused by the death, the danger, and the suffering among my crew and passengers, I had had a little distress of my own to shake me still more, in the death of the child whom I had got to be very fond of on the voyage out—so fond that I was secretly a little jealous of her being taken in the long-boat instead of mine

when the ship foundered. It used to be a great comfort to me, and I think to those with me also, after we had seen the last of the "Golden Mary," to see the golden Lucy, held up by the men in the long-boat, when the weather allowed it, as the best and brightest sight they had to show. She looked, at the distance we saw her from, almost like a little white bird in the air. To miss her for the first time, when the weather lulled a little again, and we all looked out for our white bird and looked in vain, was a sore disappointment. To see the men's heads bowed down and the captain's hand pointing into the sea when we hailed the long-boat, a few days after, gave me as heavy a shock and as sharp a pang of heartache to bear as ever I remember suffering in all my life. I only mention these things to show that if I did give way a little at first, under the dread that our captain was lost to us, it was not without having been a good deal shaken beforehand by more trials of one sort or another than often fall to one man's share.

I had got over the choking in my throat with the help of a drop of water, and had steadied my mind again so as to be prepared against the worst, when I heard the hail (Lord help the poor fellows, how weak it sounded!)—

"Surf-boat, ahoy!"

I looked up, and there were our companions in misfortune tossing abreast of us; not so near that we could make out the features of any of them, but near enough, with some exertion for people in our condition, to make their voices heard in the intervals when the wind was weakest.

I answered the hail, and waited a bit, and heard nothing, and then sung out the captain's name. The voice that replied did not sound like his; the words that reached us were—

“Chief mate wanted on board!”

Every man of my crew knew what that meant as well as I did. As second officer in command, there could be but one reason for wanting me on board the long-boat. A groan went all round us, and my men looked darkly in each other's faces, and whispered under their breaths—

“The captain is dead!”

I commanded them to be silent, and not to make too sure of bad news, at such a pass as things had now come to with us. Then, hailing the long-boat, I signified that I was ready to go on board when the weather would let me—stopped a bit to draw a good long breath—and then called out as loud as I could the dreadful question—

“Is the captain dead?”

The black figures of three or four men in the after-part of the long-boat all stooped down together as my voice reached them. They were lost to view for about a minute; then appeared again—one man among them was held up on his feet by the rest, and he hailed back the blessed words (a very faint hope went a very long way with people in our desperate situation), “Not yet!”

The relief felt by me, and by all with me, when we knew that our captain, though unfitted for duty, was not lost to us, it is not in words—at least, not in such words as a man like me can command—to express. I did my best to cheer the men by

telling them what a good sign it was that we were not as badly off yet as we had feared; and then communicated what instructions I had to give to William Rames, who was to be left in command in my place when I took charge of the long-boat. After that, there was nothing to be done but to wait for the chance of the wind dropping at sunset, and the sea going down afterwards, so as to enable our weak crews to lay the two boats alongside of each other, without undue risk—or, to put it plainer, without saddling ourselves with the necessity for any extraordinary exertion of strength or skill. Both the one and the other had now been starved out of us for days and days together.

At sunset the wind suddenly dropped, but the sea, which had been running high for so long a time past, took hours after that before it showed any signs of getting to rest. The moon was shining, the sky was wonderfully clear, and it could not have been, according to my calculations, far off midnight, when the long, slow, regular swell of the calming ocean fairly set in, and I took the responsibility of lessening the distance between the long-boat and ourselves.

It was, I dare say, a delusion of mine; but I thought I had never seen the moon shine so white and ghastly anywhere, either at sea or on land, as she shone that night while we were approaching our companions in misery. When there was not much more than a boat's length between us, and the white light streamed cold and clear over all our faces, both crews rested on their oars with one great shudder, and stared over the gunwale of

either boat, panic-stricken at the first sight of each other.

"Any lives lost among you?" I asked, in the midst of that frightful silence.

The men in the long-boat huddled together like sheep at the sound of my voice.

"None yet, but the child, thanks be to God!" answered one among them.

And at the sound of his voice, all my men shrank together like the men in the long-boat. I was afraid to let the horror produced by our first meeting at close quarters after the dreadful changes that wet, cold, and famine had produced, last one moment longer than could be helped; so, without giving time for any more questions and answers, I commanded the men to lay the two boats close alongside of each other. When I rose up and committed the tiller to the hands of Rames, all my poor fellows raised their white faces imploringly to mine. "Don't leave us, sir," they said, "don't leave us." "I leave you," says I, "under the command and the guidance of Mr. William Rames, as good a sailor as I am, and as trusty and kind a man as ever stepped. Do your duty by him, as you have done it by me; and remember to the last, that while there is life there is hope. God bless and help you all!" With those words I collected what strength I had left, and caught at two arms that were held out to me, and so got from the stern-sheets of one boat into the stern-sheets of the other.

"Mind where you step, sir," whispered one of the men who had helped me into the long-boat. I

looked down as he spoke. Three figures were huddled up below me, with the moonshine falling on them in ragged streaks through the gaps between the men standing or sitting above them. The first face I made out was the face of Miss Coleshaw, her eyes were wide open and fixed on me. She seemed still to keep her senses, and, by the alternate parting and closing of her lips, to be trying to speak, but I could not hear that she uttered a single word. On her shoulder rested the head of Mrs. Atherfield. The mother of our poor little golden Lucy must, I think, have been dreaming of the child she had lost; for there was a faint smile just ruffling the white stillness of her face, when I first saw it turned upward, with peaceful and closed eyes towards the heavens. From her, I looked down a little, and there, with his head on her lap, and with one of her hands resting tenderly on his cheek—there lay the captain, to whose help and guidance, up to this miserable time, we had never looked in vain—there, worn out at last in our service, and for our sakes, lay the best and bravest man of all our company. I stole my hand in gently through his clothes and laid it on his heart, and felt a little feeble warmth over it, though my cold dulled touch could not detect even the faintest beating. The two men in the stern-sheets with me, noticing what I was doing—knowing I loved him like a brother—and seeing, I suppose, more distress in my face than I myself was conscious of showing, lost command over themselves altogether, and burst into a piteous moaning, sobbing lamentation over him. One of the two drew aside a jacket from his feet, and showed me that they were bare, except where a wet,

ragged strip of stocking still clung to one of them. When the ship struck the iceberg, he had run on deck leaving his shoes in his cabin. All through the voyage in the boat his feet had been unprotected; and not a soul had discovered it until he dropped! As long as he could keep his eyes open, the very look of them had cheered the men, and comforted and upheld the women. Not one living creature in the boat, with any sense about him, but had felt the good influence of that brave man in one way or another. Not one but had heard him, over and over again, give the credit to others which was due only to himself; praising this man for patience, and thanking that man for help, when the patience and the help had really and truly, as to the best part of both, come only from him. All this, and much more, I heard pouring confusedly from the men's lips while they crouched down, sobbing and crying over their commander, and wrapping the jacket as warmly and tenderly as they could over his cold feet. It went to my heart to check them; but I knew that if this lamenting spirit spread any further, all chance of keeping alight any last sparks of hope and resolution among the boat's company would be lost for ever. Accordingly I sent them to their places, spoke a few encouraging words to the men forward, promising to serve out, when the morning came, as much as I dared, of any eatable thing left in the lockers; called to Rames, in my old boat, to keep as near us as he safely could; drew the garments and coverings of the two poor suffering women more closely about them; and, with a secret prayer to be directed for the best in bearing the awful responsibility now laid on my

shoulders, took my captain's vacant place at the helm of the long-boat.

This, as well as I can tell it, is the full and true account of how I came to be placed in charge of the lost passengers and crew of the "Golden Mary," on the morning of the twenty-seventh day after the ship struck the iceberg, and foundered at sea.

[This is the end of Dickens's contribution to the Christmas number of *Household Words* for 1856. The concluding chapters of the story are the work of other writers.]

The Perils of Certain English
Prisoners.

The Perils of Certain English Prisoners.

CHAPTER I.

THE ISLAND OF SILVER-STORE.

IT was in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-four, that I, Gill Davis to command, his mark, having then the honour to be a private in the Royal Marines, stood a-leaning over the bulwarks of the armed sloop "Christopher Columbus," in the South American waters off the Mosquito shore.

My lady remarks to me, before I go any further, that there is no such christian-name as Gill, and that her confident opinion is, that the name given to me in the baptism wherein I was made, etc., was Gilbert. She is certain to be right, but I never heard of it. I was a foundling child, picked up somewhere or another, and I always understood my christian-name to be Gill. It is true that I was called Gills when employed at Snorridge Bottom, betwixt Chatham and Maidstone, to frighten birds; but that had nothing to do with the baptism wherein I was made, etc., and wherein a number of things were promised for me by somebody, who let me alone ever afterwards as to performing any of them, and who, I consider, must have been the beadle. Such name of Gills was entirely owing to my cheeks, or gills, which at that time of my life were of a raspy description.

My lady stops me again, before I go any further by laughing exactly in her old way and waving the feather of her pen at me. That action on her part, calls to my mind as I look at her hand with the rings on it—— Well! I won't! To be sure it will come in, in its own place. But it's always strange to me, noticing the quiet hand, and noticing it (as I have done, you know, so many times) a-fondling children and grandchildren asleep, to think that when blood and honour were up—there! I won't! not at present!—Scratch it out.

She won't scratch it out, and quite honourable; because we have made an understanding that everything is to be taken down, and that nothing that is once taken down shall be scratched out. I have the great misfortune not to be able to read and write, and I am speaking my true and faithful account of those adventures, and my lady is writing it, word for word.

I say, there I was, a-leaning over the bulwarks of the sloop "Christopher Columbus" in the South American waters off the Mosquito shore; a subject of his Gracious Majesty King George of England, and a private in the Royal Marines.

In those climates, you don't want to do much. I was doing nothing. I was thinking of the shepherd (my father, I wonder?) on the hill-sides by Snorridge Bottom, with a long staff, and with a rough white-coat in all weathers all the year round, who used to let me lie in a corner of his hut by night, and who used to let me go about with him and his sheep by day when I could get nothing else to do, and who used to give me so little of his victuals.

and so much of his staff, that I ran away from him—which was what he wanted all along, I expect—to be knocked about the world in preference to Snorridge Bottom. I had been knocked about the world for nine-and-twenty years in all, when I stood looking along those bright blue South American waters. Looking after the shepherd, I may say. Watching him in a half-waking dream, with my eyes half-shut, as he, and his flock of sheep, and his two dogs, seemed to move away from the ship's side, far away over the blue water, and go right down into the sky.

"It's rising out of the water, steady," a voice said close to me. I had been thinking on so, that it like woke me with a start, though it was no stranger voice than the voice of Harry Charker, my own comrade.

"What's rising out of the water, steady?" I asked my comrade.

"What?" says he. "The island."

"Oh! The island!" says I, turning my eyes towards it. "True. I forgot the island."

"Forgot the port you're going to? That's odd, ain't it?"

"It is odd," says I.

"And odd," he said, slowly considering with himself, "ain't even. Is it, Gill?"

He had always a remark just like that to make, and seldom another. As soon as he had brought a thing round to what it was not, he was satisfied. He was one of the best of men, and, in a certain sort of way, one with the least to say for himself. I qualify it, because, besides being able to read and

write like a quarter-master, he had always one most excellent idea in his mind. That was, duty. Upon my soul, I don't believe, though I admire learning beyond everything, that he could have got a better idea out of all the books in the world, if he had learned them every word, and been the cleverest of scholars.

My comrade and I had been quartered in Jamaica, and from there we had been drafted off to the British settlement of Belize, lying away west and north of the Mosquito coast. At Belize there had been great alarm of one cruel gang of pirates (there were always more pirates than enough in those Caribbean Seas), and as they got the better of our English cruisers by running into out-of-the-way creeks and shallows, and taking the land when they were hotly pressed, the governor of Belize had received orders from home to keep a sharp look-out for them along shore. Now, there was an armed sloop came once a year from Port Royal, Jamaica, to the island, laden with all manner of necessaries, to eat, and to drink, and to wear, and to use in various ways; and it was aboard of that sloop which had touched at Belize, that I was a-standing, leaning over the bulwarks.

The island was occupied by a very small English colony. It has been given the name of Silver-Store. The reason of its being so called, was, that the English colony owned and worked a silver-mine over on the mainland, in Honduras, and used this island as a safe and convenient place to store their silver in, until it was annually fetched away by the sloop. It was brought down from the mine to the

coast on the backs of mules, attended by friendly Indians and guarded by white men; from thence it was conveyed over to Silver-Store, when the weather was fair, in the canoes of that country; from Silver-Store it was carried to Jamaica by the armed sloop once a year, as I have already mentioned; from Jamaica it went, of course, all over the world.

How I came to be aboard the armed sloop, is easily told. Four-and-twenty marines under command of a lieutenant—that officer's name was Linderwood—had been told off at Belize, to proceed to Silver-Store, in aid of boats and seamen stationed there for the chase of the pirates. The island was considered a good post of observation against the pirates, both by land and sea; neither the pirate ship nor yet her boats had been seen by any of us, but they had been so much heard of, that the reinforcement was sent. Of that party, I was one. It included a corporal and a sergeant. Charker was corporal, and the sergeant's name was Drooce. He was the most tyrannical non-commissioned officer in his Majesty's service.

The night came on, soon after I had had the foregoing words with Charker. All the wonderful bright colours went out of the sea and sky in a few minutes, and all the stars in the heavens seemed to shine out together, and to look down at themselves in the sea, over one another's shoulders, millions deep. Next morning, we cast anchor off the island. There was a snug harbour within a little reef; there was a sandy beach; there were cocoa-nut trees with high straight stems, quite bare, and foliage at the top like plumes of magnificent green feathers; there were all the

objects that are usually seen in those parts, and I am not going to describe them, having something else to tell about.

Great rejoicings, to be sure, were made on our arrival. All the flags in the place were hoisted, all the guns in the place were fired, and all the people in the place came down to look at us. One of those Sambo fellows—they call those natives Sambos, when they are half-negro and half-Indian—had come off outside the reef, to pilot us in, and remained on board after we had let go our anchor. He was called Christian George King, and was fonder of all hands than anybody else was. Now, I confess, for myself, that on that first day, if I had been captain of the “Christopher Columbus,” instead of private in the Royal Marines, I should have kicked Christian George King—who was no more a Christian than he was a king or a George—over the side, without exactly knowing why, except that it was the right thing to do.

But I must likewise confess that I was not in a particularly pleasant humour, when I stood under arms that morning, aboard the “Christopher Columbus,” in the harbour of the island of Silver-Store. I had had a hard life, and the life of the English on the island seemed too easy and too gay to please me. “Here you are,” I thought to myself, “good scholars and good livers ; able to read what you like, able to write what you like, able to eat and drink what you like, and spend what you like, and do what you like ; and much *you* care for a poor, ignorant private in the Royal Marines ! Yet it’s hard, too, I think, that you should have all the halfpence, and

I all the kicks ; you all the smooth, and I all the rough ; you all the oil, and I all the vinegar." It was as envious a thing to think as might be, let alone its being nonsensical ; but I thought it. I took it so much amiss, that, when a very beautiful young English lady came aboard, I grunted to myself, "Ah ! *you* have got a lover, I'll be bound !" As if there was any new offence to me in that, if she had !

She was sister to the captain of our sloop, who had been in a poor way for some time, and who was so ill then that he was obliged to be carried ashore. She was the child of a military officer, and had come out there with her sister, who was married to one of the owners of the silver-mine, and who had three children with her. It was easy to see that she was the light and spirit of the island. After I had got a good look at her, I grunted to myself again, in an even worse state of mind than before, "I'll be damned, if I don't hate him, whoever he is !"

My officer, Lieutenant Linderwood, was as ill as the captain of the sloop, and was carried ashore, too. They were both young men of about my age, who had been delicate in the West India climate. I even took *that* in bad part. I thought I was much fitter for the work than they were, and that if all of us had our deserts, I should be both of them rolled into one. (It may be imagined what sort of an officer of marines I should have made, without the power of reading a written order. And as to any knowledge how to command the sloop—Lord ! I should have sunk her in a quarter of an hour !)

However, such were my reflections ; and when we men were ashore and dismissed, I strolled about the

place along with Charker, making my observations in a similar spirit.

It was a pretty place : in all its arrangements partly South American and partly English, and very agreeable to look at on that account, being like a bit of home that had got chipped off and had floated away to that spot, accommodating itself to circumstances as it drifted along. The huts of the Sambos, to the number of five-and-twenty, perhaps, were down by the beach to the left of the anchorage. On the right was a sort of barrack, with a South American flag and the Union Jack, flying from the same staff, where the little English colony could all come together, if they saw occasion. It was a walled square of building, with a sort of pleasure-ground inside, and inside that again a sunken block like a powder magazine, with a little square trench round it, and steps down to the door. Charker and I were looking in at the gate, which was not guarded ; and I had said to Charker, in reference to the bit like a powder magazine, "that's where they keep the silver you see ;" and Charker had said to me, after thinking it over, "And silver ain't gold. Is it, Gill?" when the beautiful young English lady I had been so bilious about, looked out of a door, or a window—at all events looked out, from under a bright awning. She no sooner saw us two in uniform, than she came out so quickly that she was still putting on her broad Mexican hat of plaited straw when we saluted.

"Would you like to come in," she said, "and see the place? It is rather a curious place."

We thanked the young lady, and said we didn't wish to be troublesome ; but, she said it could be no

trouble to an English soldier's daughter, to show English soldiers how their countrymen and countrywomen fared, so far away from England; and consequently we saluted again, and went in. Then, as we stood in the shade, she showed us (being as affable as beautiful) how the different families lived in their separate houses, and how there was a general house for stores, and a general reading-room, and a general room for music and dancing, and a room for church; and how there were other houses on the rising ground called the Signal Hill, where they lived in the hotter weather.

"Your officer has been carried up there," she said, "and my brother, too, for the better air. At present, our few residents are dispersed over both spots: deducting, that is to say, such of our number as are always going to, or coming from, or staying at, the mine."

("He is among one of those parties," I thought, "and I wish somebody would knock his head off.")

"Some of our married ladies live here," she said, "during at least half the year, as lonely as widows, with their children."

"Many children here, ma'am?"

"Seventeen. There are thirteen married ladies, and there are eight like me."

There were not eight like her—there was not one like her—in the world. She meant single.

"Which, with about thirty Englishmen of various degrees," said the young lady, "form the little colony now on the island. I don't count the sailors, for they don't belong to us. Nor the soldiers," she gave

us a gracious smile when she spoke of the soldiers, "for the same reason."

"Nor the Sambos, ma'am," said I.

"No."

"Under your favour, and with your leave, ma'am," said I, "are they trustworthy?"

"Perfectly! We are all very kind to them, and they are very grateful to us."

"Indeed, ma'am? Now — Christian George King——"

"Very much attached to us all. Would die for us."

She was, as in my uneducated way I have observed very beautiful women almost always to be, so composed, that her composure gave great weight to what she said, and I believed it.

Then she pointed out to us the building like a powder magazine, and explained to us in what manner the silver was brought from the mine, and was brought over from the mainland, and was stored there. The "Christopher Columbus" would have a rich lading, she said, for there had been a great yield that year, a much richer yield than usual, and there was a chest of jewels besides the silver.

When we had looked about us, and were getting sheepish, through fearing we were troublesome, she turned us over to a young woman, English born but West India bred, who served her as her maid. This young woman was the widow of a non-commissioned officer in a regiment of the line. She had got married and widowed at St. Vincent, with only a few months between the two events. She was a little saucy woman, with a bright pair of eyes, rather a neat little

foot and figure, and rather a neat little turned-up nose. The sort of young woman, I considered at the time, who appeared to invite you to give her a kiss, and who would have slapped your face if you accepted the invitation.

I couldn't make out her name at first; for, when she gave it in answer to my inquiry, it sounded like Beltot, which didn't sound right. But, when we became better acquainted—which was while Charker and I were drinking sugar-cane sangaree, which she made in a most excellent manner—I found that her Christian name was Isabella, which they shortened into Bell, and that the name of the deceased non-commissioned officer was Tott. Being the kind of neat little woman it was natural to make a toy of—I never saw a woman so like a toy in my life—she had got the plaything name of Belltott. In short, she had no other name on the island. Even Mr. Commissioner Pordage (and *he* was a grave one!) formally addressed her as Mrs. Belltott. But I shall come to Mr. Commissioner Pordage presently.

The name of the captain of the sloop was Captain Maryon, and therefore it was no news to hear from Mrs. Belltott, that his sister, the beautiful unmarried young English lady, was Miss Maryon. The novelty was that her Christian name was Marion too. Marion Maryon. Many a time I have run off those two names in my thoughts, like a bit of verse. Oh, many, and many, and many a time!

We saw out all the drink that was produced, like good men and true, and then took our leave, and went down to the beach. The weather was beautiful; the wind steady, low, and gentle; the island, a picture;

the sea, a picture ; the sky, a picture. In that country there are two rainy seasons in the year. One sets in at about our English midsumm̃er ; the other, about a fortnight after our English Michaelmas. It was the beginning of August at that time ; the first of these rainy seasons was well over ; and everything was in its most beautiful growth, and had its loveliest look upon it.

"They enjoy themselves here," I says to Charker, turning surly again. "This is better than private-soldiering."

We had come down to the beach, to be friendly with the boat's-crew who were camped and hutted there ; and we were approaching towards their quarters over the sand, when Christian George King comes up from the landing-place at a wolf's-trot, crying, "Yup, so-jeer !"—which was that Sambo pilot's barbarous way of saying, Hollo, soldier ! I have stated myself to be a man of no learning, and, if I entertain prejudices, I hope allowance may be made. I will now confess to one. It may be a right one or it may be a wrong one ; but, I never did like natives, except in the form of oysters.

So, when Christian George King, who was individually unpleasant to me besides, comes a-trotting along the sand, clucking, "Yup so-jeer !" I had a thundering good mind to let fly at him with my right. I certainly should have done it, but that it would have exposed me to reprimand.

"Yup, so-jeer !" says he. "Bad job."

"What do you mean ?" says I.

"Yup, so-jeer !" says he, "ship leakee."

"Ship leaky ?" says I.

"Iss," says he, with a nod that looked as if it was jerked out of him by a most violent hiccup—which is the way with those savages.

I cast my eyes at Charker, and we both heard the pumps going aboard the sloop, and saw the signal run up, "Come on board; hands wanted from the shore." In no time some of the sloop's liberty-men were already running down to the water's edge, and the party of seamen, under orders against the pirates, were putting off to the "Columbus" in two boats.

"Oh, Christian George King, sar, berry sorry!" says that Sambo vagabond, then. "Christian George King cry, English fashion!" His English fashion of crying was to screw his black knuckles into his eyes, howl like a dog, and roll himself on his back in the sand. It was trying not to kick him, but I gave Charker the word, "Double-quick, Harry!" and we got down to the water's edge, and got on board the sloop.

By some means or other, she had sprung such a leak, that no pumping would keep her free; and what between the two fears that she would go down in the harbour, and that, even if she did not, all the supplies she had brought for the little colony would be destroyed by the sea-water as it rose in her, there was great confusion. In the midst of it, Captain Maryon was heard hailing from the beach. He had been carried down in his hammock, and looked very bad; but he insisted on being stood there on his feet; and I saw him, myself, come off in the boat, sitting upright in the stern-sheets, as if nothing was wrong with him.

A quick sort of council was held, and Captain Maryon soon resolved that we must all fall to work to get the cargo out, and that when that was done, the guns and heavy matters must be got out, and that the sloop must be hauled ashore, and careened, and the leak stopped. We were all mustered (the pirate-chase-party volunteering), and told off into parties, with so many hours of spell and so many hours of relief, and we all went at it with a will. Christian George King was entered one of the party in which I worked, at his own request, and he went at it with as good a will as any of the rest. He went at it with so much heartiness, to say the truth, that he rose in my good opinion almost as fast as the water rose in the ship. Which was fast enough, and faster.

Mr. Commissioner Pordage kept in a red-and-black japanned box, like a family lump-sugar box, some document or other, which some Sambo chief or other had got drunk and spilt some ink over (as well as I could understand the matter), and by that means had given up lawful possession of the island. Through having hold of this box, Mr. Pordage got his title of commissioner. He was styled consul too, and spoke of himself as "Government."

He was a stiff-jointed, high-nosed old gentleman, without an ounce of fat on him, of a very angry temper and a very yellow complexion. Mrs. Commissioner Pordage, making allowance for difference of sex, was much the same. Mr. Kitten, a small, youngish, bald, botanical and mineralogical gentleman, also connected with the mine—but everybody there was that, more or less—was sometimes called

by Mr. Commissioner Pordage, his vice-commissioner, and sometimes his deputy-consul. Or sometimes he spoke of Mr. Kitten, merely as being "under Government."

The beach was beginning to be a lively scene with the preparations for careening the sloop, and, with cargo, and spars, and rigging, and water-casks, dotted about it, and with temporary quarters for the men rising up there out of such sails and odds and ends as could be best set on one side to make them, when Mr. Commissioner Pordage comes down in a high fluster, and asks for Captain Maryon. The captain, ill as he was, was slung in his hammock betwixt two trees, that he might direct; and he raised his head, and answered for himself.

"Captain Maryon," cries Mr. Commissioner Pordage, "this is not official. This is not regular."

"Sir," says the captain, "it hath been arranged with the clerk and supercargo, that you should be communicated with, and requested to render any little assistance that may lie in your power. I am quite certain that hath been duly done."

"Captain Maryon," replies Mr. Commissioner Pordage, "there hath been no written correspondence. No documents have passed, no memoranda have been made, no minutes have been made, no entries and counter-entries appear in the official muniments. This is indecent. I call upon you, sir, to desist, until all is regular, or Government will take this up."

"Sir," says Captain Maryon, chafing a little, as he looked out of his hammock; "between the chances of Government taking this up, and my ship

taking herself down, I much prefer to trust myself to the former."

"You do, sir?" cries Mr. Commissioner Pordage.

"I do, sir," says Captain Maryon, lying down again.

"Then, Mr. Kitten," says the commissioner, "send up instantly for my diplomatic coat."

He was dressed in a linen suit at that moment; but, Mr. Kitten started off himself and brought down the diplomatic coat, which was a blue cloth one, gold-laced, and with a crown on the button.

"Now, Mr. Kitten," says Pordage, "I instruct you, as vice-commissioner, and deputy-consul of this place, to demand of Captain Maryon, of the sloop 'Christopher Columbus,' whether he drives me to the act of putting this coat on?"

"Mr. Pordage," says Captain Maryon, looking out of his hammock again, "as I can hear what you say, I can answer it without troubling the gentleman. I should be sorry that you should be at the pains of putting on too hot a coat on my account; but, otherwise, you may put it on hind-side before, or inside-out, or with your legs in the sleeves, or your head in the skirts, for any objection that I have to offer to your thoroughly pleasing yourself."

"Very good, Captain Maryon," says Pordage, in a tremendous passion. "Very good, sir. Be the consequences on your own head! Mr. Kitten, as it has come to this, help me on with it."

When he had given that order, he walked off in the coat, and all our names were taken, and I was afterwards told that Mr. Kitten wrote from his dictation more than a bushel of large paper on the

subject, which cost more before it was done with, than ever could be calculated, and which only got done with after all, by being lost.

Our work went on merrily, nevertheless, and the "Christopher Columbus," hauled up, lay helpless on her side like a great fish out of water. While she was in that state, there was a feast, or a ball, or an entertainment, or more properly all three together, given us in honour of the ship, and the ship's company, and the other visitors. At that assembly, I believe, I saw all the inhabitants then upon the island, without any exception. I took no particular notice of more than a few, but I found it very agreeable in that little corner of the world to see the children, who were of all ages, and mostly very pretty—as they mostly are. There was one handsome elderly lady, with very dark eyes and gray hair, that I inquired about. I was told that her name was Mrs. Venning; and her married daughter, a fair slight thing, was pointed out to me by the name of Fanny Fisher. Quite a child she looked, with a little copy of herself holding to her dress; and her husband, just come back from the mine, exceeding proud of her. They were a good-looking set of people on the whole, but I didn't like them. I was out of sorts; in conversation with Charker, I found fault with all of them. I said of Mrs. Venning, she was proud; of Mrs. Fisher, she was a delicate little baby-fool. What did I think of this one? Why, he was a fine gentleman. What did I say to that one? Why, she was a fine lady. What could you expect them to be (I asked Charker), nursed in that climate, with the tropical night shining for them, musical

instruments playing to them, great trees bending over them, soft lamps lighting them, fire-flies sparkling in among them, bright flowers and birds brought into existence to please their eyes, delicious drinks to be had for the pouring out, delicious fruits to be got for the picking, and everyone dancing and murmuring happily in the scented air, with the sea breaking low on the reef for a pleasant chorus.

"Fine gentlemen and fine ladies, Harry?" I says to Charker. "Yes, I think so! Dolls! Dolls! Not the sort of stuff for wear, that comes of pool private soldering in the Royal Marines!"

However, I could not gainsay that they were very hospitable people, and that they treated us uncommonly well. Every man of us was at the entertainment, and Mrs. Belltott had more partners than she could dance with: though she danced all night, too. As to Jack (whether of the "Christopher Columbus," or of the pirate-pursuit-party, it made no difference), he danced with his brother Jack, danced with himself, danced with the moon, the stars, the trees, the prospect, anything. I didn't greatly take to the chief-officer of that party, with his bright eyes, brown face, and easy figure. I didn't much like his way when he first happened to come where we were, with Miss Maryon on his arm. "Oh, Captain Carton," she says, "here are two friends of mine!" He says, "Indeed? These two marines?"—meaning Charker and self. "Yes," says she, "I showed these two friends of mine when they first came, all the wonders of Silver-Store." He gave us a laughing look, and says he, "You are in luck, men. I would be disrated and go before the mast to-morrow, to be shown the

way upward again by such a guide. You are in luck, men." When we had saluted, and he and the lady had waltzed away, I said, "You are a pretty fellow too, to talk of luck. You may go to the devil!"

Mr. Commissioner Pordage and Mrs. Commissioner showed among the company on that occasion like the king and queen of a much greater Britain than Great Britain. Only two other circumstances in that jovial night made much separate impression on me. One was this. A man in our draft of marines, named Tom Packer, a wild, unsteady young fellow, but the son of a respectable shipwright in Portsmouth Yard, and a good scholar who had been well brought up, comes to me after a spell of dancing, and takes me aside by the elbow, and says, swearing angrily—

"Gill Davis, I hope I may not be the death of Sergeant Drooce one day!"

Now, I knew Drooce had always borne particularly hard on this man, and I knew this man to be of a very hot temper, so I said—

"Tut, nonsense! don't talk so to me! If there's a man in the corps who scorns the name of an assassin, that man and Tom Packer are one."

Tom wipes his head, being in a mortal sweat, and says he—

"I hope so, but I can't answer for myself when he lords it over me, as he has just now done, before a woman. I tell you what, Gill! Mark my words! It will go hard with Sergeant Drooce, if ever we are in an engagement together, and he has to look to me to save him. Let him say a prayer then, if he knows

one, for it's all over with him, and he is on his death-bed. Mark my words!"

I did mark his words, and very soon afterwards, too, as will shortly be taken down.

The other circumstance that I noticed at that ball was the gaiety and attachment of Christian George King. The innocent spirits that Sambo pilot was in, and the impossibility he found himself under of showing all the little colony, but especially the ladies and children, how fond he was of them, how devoted to them, and how faithful to them for life and death, for present, future, and everlasting, made a great impression on me. If ever a man, Sambo or no Sambo, was trustful and trusted, to what may be called quite an infantine and sweetly beautiful extent, surely, I thought that morning when I did at last lie down to rest, it was that Sambo pilot, Christian George King.

This may account for my dreaming of him. He stuck in my sleep, cornerwise, and I couldn't get him out. He was always flitting about me, dancing round me, and peeping in over my hammock, though I woke and dozed off again fifty times. At last, when I opened my eyes, there he really was, looking in at the open side of the little dark hut; which was made of leaves, and had Charker's hammock slung in it as well as mine.

"So-jeer!" says he, in a sort of a low croak. "Yup!"

"Hollo!" says I, starting up. "What? You are there, are you?"

"Iss," says he. "Christian George King got news."

"What news has he got?"

"Pirates out!"

I was on my feet in a second. So was Charker. We were both aware that Captain Carton, in command of the boats, constantly watched the mainland for a secret signal, though, of course, it was not known to such as us what the signal was.

Christian George King had vanished before we touched the ground. But the word was already passing from hut to hut to turn out quietly, and we knew that the nimble barbarian had got hold of the truth, or something near it.

In a space among the trees behind the encampment of us visitors, naval and military, was a snugly-screened spot, where we kept the stores that were in use, and did our cookery. The word was passed to assemble here. It was very quickly given, and was given (so far as we were concerned) by Sergeant Drooce, who was as good in a soldier point of view as he was bad in a tyrannical one. We were ordered to drop into this space, quietly, behind the trees, one by one. As we assembled here, the seamen assembled too. Within ten minutes, as I should estimate, we were all here, except the usual guard upon the beach. The beach (we could see it through the wood) looked as it always had done in the hottest time of the day. The guard were in the shadow of the sloop's hull, and nothing was moving but the sea, and that moved very faintly. Work had always been knocked off at that hour, until the sun grew less fierce and the sea-breeze rose; so that its being holiday with us made no difference, just then, in the look of the place. But I may mention that it was a holiday, and the first we

had had since our hard work began. Last night's ball had been given, on the leak's being repaired and the careening done. The worst of the work was over, and to-morrow we were to begin to get the sloop afloat again.

We marines were now drawn up here under arms. The chase-party were drawn up separate. The men of the *Columbus* were drawn up separate. The officers stepped out into the midst of the three parties, and spoke so as all might hear. Captain Carton was the officer in command, and he had a spy-glass in his hand. His coxswain stood by him with another spy-glass, and with a slate on which he seemed to have been taking down signals.

"Now, men!" says Captain Carton, "I have to let you know, for your satisfaction: firstly, that there are ten pirate-boats, strongly manned and armed, lying hidden up a creek yonder on the coast, under the overhanging branches of the dense trees. Secondly, that they will certainly come out this night when the moon rises, on a pillaging and murdering expedition, of which some part of the mainland is the object. Thirdly--don't cheer, men!--that we will give chase, and, if we can get at them, rid the world of them, please God!"

Nobody spoke, that I heard, and nobody moved, that I saw. Yet there was a kind of ring, as if every man answered and approved with the best blood that was inside of him.

"Sir," says Captain Maryon, "I beg to volunteer on this service, with my boats. My people volunteer, to the ship's boys."

"In his Majesty's name and service," the other

answers, touching his hat, "I accept your aid with pleasure. Lieutenant Linderwood, how will you divide your men?"

I was ashamed—I gave it out to be written down as large and plain as possible—I was heart and soul ashamed of my thoughts of those two sick officers, Captain Maryon and Lieutenant Linderwood, when I saw them, then and there. The spirit in those two gentlemen beat down their illness (and very ill I knew them to be) like St. George beating down the dragon. Pain and weakness, want of ease and want of rest, had no more place in their minds than fear itself. Meaning now to express, for my lady to write down, exactly what I felt then and there, I felt this: "You two brave fellows that I had been so grudgeful of, I know that if you were dying you would put it off to get up and do your best, and then you would be so modest that in lying down again to die, you would hardly say, "I did it!"

It did me good. It really did me good.

But to go back to where I broke off. Says Captain Carton to Lieutenant Linderwood, "Sir, how will you divide your men? There is not room for all; and a few men should, in any case, be left here."

There was some debate about it. At last it was resolved to leave eight marines and four seamen on the island, besides the sloop's two boys. And because it was considered that the friendly Sambos would only want to be commanded in case of any danger (though none at all was apprehended there), the officers were in favour of leaving the two non-commissioned officers, Drooce and Charker. It was a heavy disappointment to them, just as my being one

of the left was a heavy disappointment to me—then, but not soon afterwards. We men drew lots for it, and I drew "island." So did Tom Packer. So, of course, did four more of our rank and file.

When this was settled, verbal instructions were given to all hands to keep the intended expedition secret, in order that the women and children might not be alarmed, or the expedition put in a difficulty by more volunteers. The assembly was to be on that same spot at sunset. Every man was to keep up an appearance, meanwhile, of occupying himself in his usual way. That is to say, every man excepting four old trusty seamen, who were appointed, with an officer, to see to the arms and ammunition, and to muffle the rullocks of the boats, and to make everything as trim and swift and silent as it could be made.

The Sambo pilot had been present all the while, in case of his being wanted, and had said to the officer in command, five hundred times over if he had said it once, that Christian George King would stay with the so-jeers, and take care of the booffer ladies and the booffer childs—booffer being that native's expression for beautiful. He was now asked a few questions concerning the putting off of the boats, and, in particular, whether there was any way of embarking at the back of the island; which Captain Carton would have half liked to do, and then have dropped round in its shadow and slanted across to the main. But "No," says Christian George King. "No, no, no! Told you so, ten time. No, no, no! All reef, all rock, all swim, all drown!" Striking out as he said it, like a swimmer gone mad, and turning over

on his back on dry land, and spluttering himself to death, in a manner that made him quite an exhibition.

The sun went down, after appearing to be a long time about it, and the assembly was called. Every man answered to his name, of course, and was at his post. It was not yet black dark, and the roll was only just gone through, when up comes Mr. Commissioner Pordage with his diplomatic coat on.

"Captain Carton," says he, "sir, what is this?"

"This, Mr. Commissioner" (he was very short with him) "is an expedition against the pirates. It is a secret expedition, so please to keep it a secret."

"Sir," says Commissioner Pordage, "I trust there is going to be no unnecessary cruelty committed?"

"Sir," returns the officer, "I trust not."

"That is not enough, sir," cries Commissioner Pordage, getting wroth. "Captain Carton, I give you notice. Government requires you to treat the enemy with great delicacy, consideration, clemency, and forbearance."

"Sir," says Captain Carton, "I am an English officer, commanding English men, and I hope I am not likely to disappoint the Government's just expectations. But I presume you know that these villains under their black flag have despoiled our countrymen of their property, burned their homes, barbarously murdered them and their little children, and worse than murdered their wives and daughters?"

"Perhaps I do, Captain Carton," answers Pordage, waving his hand, with dignity; "perhaps I do not. It is not customary, sir, for Government to commit itself."

"It matters very little, Mr. Pordage, whether or

no. Believing that I hold my commission by the allowance of God, and not that I have received it direct from the devil, I shall certainly use it, with all avoidance of unnecessary suffering and with all merciful swiftness of execution, to exterminate these people from the face of the earth. Let me recommend you to go home, sir, and to keep out of the night-air."

Never another syllable did that officer say to the commissioner, but turned away to his men. The commissioner buttoned his diplomatic coat to the chin, said, "Mr. Kitten, attend me!" gasped, half choked himself, and took himself off.

It now fell very dark indeed. I have seldom, if ever, seen it darker, nor yet so dark. The moon was not due until one in the morning, and it was but a little after nine when our men lay down where they were mustered. It was pretended that they were to take a nap, but everybody knew that no nap was to be got under the circumstances. Though all were very quiet, there was a restlessness among the people; much what I have seen among the people on a race-course, when the bell has rung for the saddling for a great race with large stakes on it.

At ten they put off; only one boat putting off at a time; another following in five minutes; both then lying on their oars until another followed. Ahead of all, paddling his own outlandish little canoe without a sound, went the Sambo pilot, to take them safely outside the reef. No light was shown but once, and that was in the commanding officer's own hand. I lighted the dark lantern for him, and he took it from me when he embarked. They had blue lights and

such like with them, but kept themselves as dark as murder.

The expedition got away with wonderful quietness, and Christian George King soon came back dancing with joy.

"Yup, so-jeer," says he to myself in a very objectionable kind of convulsions, "Christian George King sar berry glad. Pirates all be blown a-pieces. Yup! Yup!"

My reply to that cannibal was, "However glad you may be, hold your noise, and don't dance jigs and slap your knees about it, for I can't a-bear to see you do it."

I was on duty then; we twelve who were left being divided into four watches of three each, three hours' spell. I was relieved at twelve. A little before that time I had challenged, and Miss Maryon and Mrs. Belltott had come in.

"Good Davis," says Miss Maryon, "what is the matter? Where is my brother?"

I told her what was the matter, and where her brother was.

"O Heaven help him!" says she, clasping her hands and looking up; she was close in front of me, and she looked most lovely, to be sure; "he is not sufficiently recovered, not strong enough for such strife!"

"If you had seen him, miss," I told her, "as I saw him when he volunteered, you would have known that his spirit is strong enough for any strife. It will bear his body, miss, to wherever duty calls him. It will always bear him to an honourable life, or a brave death."

"Heaven bless you!" says she, touching my arm. "I know it. Heaven bless you!"

Mrs. Belltott surprised me by trembling and saying nothing. They were still standing looking towards the sea and listening, after the relief had come round. It continuing very dark, I asked to be allowed to take them back. Miss Maryon thanked me, and she put her arm in mine, and I did take them back. I have now got to make a confession that will appear singular. After I had left them, I laid myself down on my face on the beach, and cried for the first time since I had frightened birds as a boy at Snorridge Bottom, to think what a poor, ignorant, low-placed, private soldier I was.

It was only for half a minute or so. A man can't at all times be quite master of himself, and it was only for half a minute or so. Then I up and went to my hut, and turned into my hammock, and fell asleep with wet eyelashes, and a sore, sore heart. Just as I had often done when I was a child, and had been worse used than usual.

I slept (as a child under those circumstances might) very sound, and yet very sore at heart all through my sleep. I was awake by the words, "He is a determined man." I had sprung out of my hammock, and had seized my firelock, and was standing on the ground, saying the words myself. "He is a determined man." But the curiosity of my state was that I seemed to be repeating them after somebody, and to have been wonderfully startled by hearing them.

As soon as I came to myself, I went out of the hut, and away to where the guard was. Charker challenged—

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Not Gill?" says he, as he shouldered his piece.

"Gill," says I.

"Why, what the deuce do you do out of your hammock?" says he.

"Too hot for sleep," says I. "Is all right?"

"Right!" says Charker, "yes yes; all's right enough here; what should be wrong here? It's the boats that we want to know of. Except for fire-flies twinkling about, and the lonesome splashes of great creatures as they drop into the water, there's nothing going on here to ease a man's mind from the boats."

The moon was above the sea, and had risen, I should say, some half an hour. As Charker spoke, with his face towards the sea, I, looking landward, suddenly laid my right hand on his breast, and said, "Don't move. Don't turn. Don't raise your voice! You never saw a Maltese face here?"

"No. What do you mean?" he asks, staring at me.

"Nor yet an English face, with one eye and a patch across the nose?"

"No. What ails you? What do you mean?"

I had seen both, looking at us round the stem of a cocoa-nut tree, where the moon struck them. I had seen that Sambo pilot, with one hand laid on the stem of the tree, drawing them back into the heavy Shadow. I had seen their naked cutlasses twinkle and shine, like bits of the moonshine in the water that had got blown ashore among the trees by the light wind. I had seen it all, in a moment.

And I saw in a moment (as any man would) that the signalled move of the pirates on the mainland was a plot and a feint; that the leak had been made to disable the sloop; that the boats had been tempted away to leave the island unprotected; that the pirates had landed by some secreted way at the back; and that Christian George King was a double-dyed traitor, and a most infernal villain.

I considered, still all in one and the same moment, that Charker was a brave man, but not quick with his head; and that Sergeant Drooce, with a much better head, was close by. All I said to Charker was, "I am afraid we are betrayed. Turn your back full to the moonlight on the sea, and cover the stem of the cocoa-nut tree which will then be right before you, at the height of a man's heart. Are you right?"

"I am right," says Charker, turning instantly, and falling into the position with a nerve of iron; "and right ain't left. Is it, Gill?"

A few seconds brought me to Sergeant Drooce's hut. He was fast asleep, and, being a heavy sleeper, I had to lay my hand upon him to rouse him. The instant I touched him he came rolling out of his hammock and upon me like a tiger. And a tiger he was, except that he knew what he was up to, in his utmost heat, as well as any man.

I had to struggle with him pretty hard to bring him to his senses, panting all the while (for he gave me a breather), "Sergeant, I am Gill Davis! Treachery! Pirates on the island!"

The last words brought him round, and he took his hands off. "I have seen two of them within this

minute," said I. And so I told him what I had told Harry Charker.

His soldierly, though tyrannical, head was clear in an instant. He didn't waste one word, even of surprise. "Order the guard," says he, "to draw off quietly into the fort." (They called the inclosure I have before mentioned the fort, though it was not much of that). "Then get you to the fort as quick as you can, rouse up every soul there, and fasten the gate. I will bring in all those who are up at the Signal Hill. If we are surrounded before we can join you, you must make a sally and cut us out if you can. The word among our men is, 'Women and children!'"

He burst away, like fire going before the wind over dry reeds. He roused up the seven men who were off duty, and had them bursting away with him, before they knew they were not asleep. I reported orders to Charker, and ran to the fort, as I have never run at any other time in all my life; no, not even in a dream.

The gate was not fast, and had no good fastening; only a double wooden bar, a poor chain, and a bad lock. Those I secured as well as they could be secured in a few seconds by one pair of hands, and so ran to that part of the building where Miss Maryon lived. I called to her loudly by her name until she answered. I then called loudly all the names I knew—Mrs. Macey (Miss Maryon's married sister), Mr. Macey, Mrs. Venning, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, even Mr. and Mrs. Pordage. Then I called out, "All you gentlemen here, get up and defend the place! We are caught in a trap. Pirates have landed. We are attacked!"

At the terrible word "pirates!"—for those villains had done such deeds in those seas as never can be told in writing, and can scarcely be so much as thought of—cries and screams rose up from every part of the place. Quickly lights moved about from window to window, and the cries moved about with them, and men, women, and children came flying down into the square. I remarked to myself, even then, what a number of things I seemed to see at once. I noticed Mrs. Macey coming towards me, carrying all her three children together. I noticed Mr. Pordage in the greatest terror, in vain trying to get on his diplomatic coat; and Mr. Kitten respectfully tying his pocket-handkerchief over Mrs. Pordage's nightcap. I noticed Mrs. Belltott run out screaming, and shrink upon the ground near me, and cover her face in her hands, and lie all of a bundle, shivering. But what I noticed with the greatest pleasure was the determined eyes with which those men of the mine, that I had thought fine gentlemen, came round me with what arms they had: to the full as cool and resolute as I could be, for my life—aye, and for my soul too, into the bargain!

The chief person being Mr. Macey, I told him how the three men of the guard would be at the gate directly, if they were not already there, and how Sergeant Drooce and the other seven were gone to bring in the outlying part of the people of Silver-Stone. I next urged him, for the love of all who were dear to him, to trust no Sambo, and, above all, if he could get any good chance at Christian George King, not to lose it, but to put him out of the world,

"I will follow your advice to the letter, Davis," says he; "what next?"

My answer was, "I think, sir, I would recommend you next to order down such heavy furniture and lumber as can be moved, and make a barricade within the gate."

"That's good again," says he; "will you see it done?"

"I'll willingly help to do it," says I, "unless or until my superior, Sergeant Drooce, gives me other orders."

He shook me by the hand, and having told off some of his companions to help me, bestirred himself to look to the arms and ammunition. A proper quick, brave, steady, ready gentleman!

One of their three little children was deaf and dumb. Miss Maryon had been from the first with all the children, soothing them, and dressing them (poor little things, they had been brought out of their beds), and making them believe that it was a game of play, so that some of them were now even laughing. I had been working hard with the others at the barricade, and had got up a pretty good breastwork within the gate. Drooce and the seven had come back, bringing in the people from the Signal Hill, and had worked along with us; but I had not so much as spoken a word to Drooce, nor had Drooce so much as spoken a word to me, for we were both too busy. The breastwork was now finished, and I found Miss Maryon at my side, with a child in her arms. Her dark hair was fastened round her head with a band. She had a quantity of it, and it looked even richer and more precious,

put up hastily out of her way, than I had seen it look when it was carefully arranged. She was very pale, but extraordinarily quiet and still.

"Dear, good Davis," said she, "I have been waiting to speak one word to you."

I turned to her directly. If I had received a musket-ball in the heart, and she had stood there, I almost believe I should have turned to her before I dropped.

"This pretty little creature," said she, kissing the child in her arms, who was playing with her hair and trying to pull it down, "cannot hear what we say—can hear nothing. I trust you so much, and have such great confidence in you, that I want you to make me a promise."

"What is it, miss?"

"That if we are defeated, and you are absolutely sure of my being taken, you will kill me."

"I shall not be alive to do it, miss. I shall have died in your defence before it comes to that. They must step across my body to lay a hand on you."

"But, if you are alive, you brave soldier." How she looked at me! "And if you cannot save me from the pirates living, you will save me dead. Tell me so."

Well! I told her I would do that at the last, if all else failed. She took my hand—my rough, coarse hand—and put it to her lips. She put it to the child's lips, and the child kissed it. I believe I had the strength of half a dozen men in me, from that moment, until the fight was over.

All this time, Mr. Commissioner Pordage had been wanting to make a proclamation to the pirates to lay

down their arms and go away ; and everybody had been hustling him about and tumbling over him, while he was calling for pen and ink to write it with. Mrs. Pordage, too, had some curious ideas about the British respectability of her nightcap (which had as many frills to it, growing in layers one inside another, as if it was a white vegetable of the artichoke sort), and she wouldn't take the nightcap off, and would be angry when it got crushed by the other ladies who were handing things about, and, in short, she gave as much trouble as her husband did. But, as we were now forming for the defence of the place, they were both poked out of the way with no ceremony. The children and ladies were got into the little trench which surrounded the silver-house (we were afraid of leaving them in any of the light buildings, lest they should be set on fire), and we made the best disposition we could. There was a pretty good store, in point of amount, of tolerable swords and cutlasses. Those were issued. There were, also, perhaps a score or so of spare muskets. Those were brought out. To my astonishment, little Mrs. Fisher, that I had taken for a doll and a baby, was not only very active in that service, but volunteered to load the spare arms.

"For I understand it well," says she cheerfully, without a shake in her voice.

"I am a soldier's daughter and a sailor's sister, and I understand it too," says Miss Maryon, just in the same way.

Steady and busy behind where I stood, those two beautiful and delicate young women fell to handling the guns, hammering the flints, looking to the locks,

and quietly directing others to pass up powder and bullets from hand to hand, as unflinching as the best of tried soldiers.

Sergeant Drooce had brought in word that the pirates were very strong in numbers—over a hundred was his estimate—and that they were not, even then, all landed; for he had seen them in a very good position on the farther side of the Signal Hill, evidently waiting for the rest of their men to come up. In the present pause, the first we had had since the alarm, he was telling this over again to Mr. Macey, when Mr. Macey suddenly cried out: “The signal! Nobody has thought of the signal!”

We knew of no signal, so we could not have thought of it.

“What signal may you mean, sir?” says Sergeant Drooce, looking sharp at him.

“There is a pile of wood upon the Signal Hill. If it could be lighted—which never has been done ye—it would be a signal of distress to the mainland.”

Charker cries, directly, “Sergeant Drooce, despatch me on that duty. Give me the two men who were on guard with me to-night, and I’ll light the fire, if it can be done.”

“And if it can’t corporal——” Mr. Macey strikes in.

“Look at these ladies and children, sir!” says Charker. “I’d sooner *light myself*, than not try any chance to save them.”

We gave him a hurrah!—it burst from us, come of it what might—and he got his two men, and was let out at the gate, and crept away. I had no sooner come back to my place from being one of the party

to handle the gate, than Miss Maryon said in a low voice behind me—

“Davis, will you look at this powder? This is not right.”

I turned my head. Christian George King again, and treachery again! Seawater had been conveyed into the magazine, and every grain of powder was spoiled!

“Stay a moment,” said Sergeant Drooce, when I had told him, without causing a movement in a muscle of his face; “look to your pouch, my lad. You, Tom Packer, look to your pouch, confound you! Look to your pouches, all you marines.”

The same artful savage had got at them, somehow or another, and the cartridges were all unserviceable. “Hum!” says the sergeant. “Look to your loading, men. You are right so far?”

Yes; we were right so far.

“Well, my lads, and gentlemen all,” says the sergeant, “this will be a hand-to-hand affair, and so much the better.”

He treated himself to a pinch of snuff, and stood up, square-shouldered and broad chested, in the light of the moon—which was now very bright—as cool as if he was waiting for a play to begin. He stood quiet, and we all stood quiet, for a matter of something like half an hour. I took notice from such whispered talk as there was, how little we that the silver did not belong to thought about it, and how much the people that it did belong to thought about it. At the end of the half-hour it was reported from the gate that Charker and the two were falling back on us, pursued by about a dozen.

"Sally! Gate-party under Gill Davis," says the sergeant, "and bring 'em in! Like men, now!"

We were not long about it, and we brought them in.

"Don't take me," says Charker, holding me round the neck, and stumbling down at my feet when the gate was fast—"don't take me near the ladies or the children, Gill. They had better not see death till it can't be helped. They'll see it soon enough."

"Harry!" I answered, holding up his head. "Comrade!"

He was cut to pieces. The signal had been secured by the first pirate party that landed; his hair was all singed off, and his face was blackened with the running pitch from a torch.

He made no complaint of pain, or of anything. "Good-bye, old chap," was all he said, with a smile. "I've got my death. And death ain't life. Is it, Gill?"

Having helped to lay his poor body on one side, I went back to my post. Sergeant Drooce looked at me, with his eyebrows a little lifted. I nodded. "Close up here men, and gentlemen all!" said the sergeant. "A place too many in the line."

The pirates were so close upon us at this time that the foremost of them were already before the gate. More and more came up with a great noise, and shouting loudly. When we believed from the sound that they were all there, we gave three English cheers. The poor little children joined, and were so fully convinced of our being at play, that they enjoyed the noise, and were heard clapping their hands in the silence that followed.

Our disposition was this, beginning with the rear. Mrs. Venning, holding her daughter's child in her arms, sat on the steps of the little square trench surrounding the silver-house, encouraging and directing those women and children as she might have done in the happiest and easiest time of her life. Then, there was an armed line, under Mr. Macey, across the width of the inclosure, facing that way and having their backs towards the gate, in order that they might watch the walls and prevent our being taken by surprise. Then there was a space of eight or ten feet deep, in which the spare arms were, and in which Miss Maryon and Mrs. Fisher, their hands and dresses blackened with the spoiled gunpowder, worked on their knees, tying such things as knives, old bayonets, and spear heads, to the muzzles of the useless muskets. Then, there was a second armed line, under Sergeant Drooce, also across the width of the inclosure, but facing to the gate. Then came the breastwork we had made, with a zigzag way through it for me and my little party to hold good in retreating, as long as we could, when we were driven from the gate. We all knew that it was impossible to hold the place long, and that our only hope was in the timely discovery of the plot by the boats, and in their coming back.

I and my men were now thrown forward to the gate. From a spy-hole I could see the whole crowd of pirates. There were Malays among them, Dutch, Maltese, Greeks, Sambos, negroes, and convict Englishmen from the West India Islands; among the last, him with the one eye and the patch across the nose. There were some Portuguese too, and a

few Spaniards. The captain was a Portuguese; a little man with very large ear-rings under a very broad hat, and a great bright shawl twisted about his shoulders. They were all strongly armed, but like a boarding party, with pikes, swords, cutlasses, and axes. I noticed a good many pistols, but not a gun of any kind among them. This gave me to understand that they had considered that a continued roll of musketry might perhaps have been heard on the mainland; also, that for the reason that fire would be seen from the mainland they would not set the fort in flames and roast us alive—which was one of their favourite ways of carrying on. I looked about for Christian George King, and if I had seen him I am much mistaken if he would not have received my one round of ball-cartridge in his head. But no Christian George King was visible.

A sort of a wild Portuguese demon, who seemed either fierce-mad or fierce-drunk—but they all seemed one or the other—came forward with the black flag, and gave it a wave or two. After that, the Portuguese captain called out in shrill English, “I say you! English fools! Open the gate! Surrender!”

As we kept close and quiet, he said something to his men which I didn’t understand, and when he had said it, the one-eyed English rascal with the patch (who had stepped out when he began) said it again in English. It was only this. “Boys of the black flag, this is to be quickly done. Take all the prisoners you can. If they don’t yield, kill the children to make them. Forward!” Then they all came on at the gate, and, in another half-minute, were smashing and splitting it in.

We struck at them through the gaps and shivers, and we dropped many of them too; but their very weight would have carried such a gate if they had been unarmed. I soon found Sergeant Drooce at my side, forming us six remaining marines in line—Tom Packer next to me—and ordering us to fall back three paces, and, as they broke in, to give them our one little volley at short distance. "Then," says he, "receive them behind your breastwork on the bayonet, and at least let every man of you pin one of the cursed cockchafers through the body."

We checked them by our fire, slight as it was, and we checked them at the breastwork. However, they broke over it like swarms of devils—they were, really and truly, more devils than men—and then it was hand to hand indeed.

We clubbed our muskets and laid about us; even then, those two ladies—always behind me—were steady and ready with the arms. I had a lot of Maltese and Malays upon me, and, but for a broadsword that Miss Maryon's own hand put in mine, should have got my end from them. But was that all? No. I saw a heap of banded dark hair and a white dress come thrice between me and them, under my own raised right arm, which each time might have destroyed the wearer of the white dress; and each time one of the lot went down, struck dead.

Drooce was armed with a broadsword too, and did such things with it, that there was a cry, in half a dozen languages, of "Kill that sergeant!" as I knew, by the cry being raised in English, and taken up in other tongues. I had received a severe cut across the left arm a few moments before, and should

have known nothing of it, except supposing that somebody had struck me a smart blow, if I had not felt weak, and seen myself covered with spouting blood, and, at the same instant of time, seen Miss Maryon tearing her dress and binding it with Mrs. Fisher's help round the wound. They called to Tom Packer, who was scouring by, to stop and guard me for one minute, while I was bound, or I should bleed to death in trying to defend myself. Tom stopped directly, with a good sabre in his hand.

In that same moment—all things seem to happen in that same moment, at such a time—half a dozen had rushed howling at Sergeant Drooce. The sergeant, stepping back against the wall, stopped one howl for ever with such a terrible blow, and waited for the rest to come on with such a wonderfully unmoved face, that they stopped and looked at him.

"See him now!" cried Tom Packer. "Now, when I could cut him out! Gill! Did I tell you to mark my words?"

I implored Tom Packer, in the Lord's name, as well as I could in my faintness, to go to the sergeant's aid.

"I hate and detest him," says Tom, moodily wavering. "Still, he is a brave man." Then he calls out, "Sergeant Drooce, Sergeant Drooce! Tell me you have driven me too hard, and are sorry for it."

The sergeant, without turning his eyes from his assailants, which would have been instant death to him, answers—

"No. I won't."

"Sergeant Drooce!" cries Tom, in a kind of an agony. "I have passed my word that I would never save you from death, if I could, but would leave you to die. Tell me you have driven me too hard and are sorry for it, and that shall go for nothing."

One of the group laid the sergeant's bald, bare head open. The sergeant laid him dead.

"I tell you," says the sergeant, breathing a little short, and waiting for the next attack, "no. I won't. If you are not man enough to strike for a fellow-soldier because he wants help, and because of nothing else, I'll go into the other world and look for a better man."

Tom swept upon them, and cut him out. Tom and he fought their way through another knot of them, and sent them flying, and came over to where I was beginning again to feel, with inexpressible joy, that I had got a sword in my hand.

They had hardly come to us, when I heard, above all the other noises, a tremendous cry of women's voices. I also saw Miss Maryon, with quite a new face, suddenly clap her two hands over Mrs. Fisher's eyes. I looked towards the silver-house, and saw Mrs. Venning—standing upright on the top of the steps of the trench, with her gray hair and her dark eyes—hide her daughter's child behind her, among the folds of her dress, strike a pirate with her other hand, and fall, shot by his pistol.

The cry arose again, and there was a terrible and confusing rush of the women into the midst of the struggle. In another moment, something came tumbling down upon me that I thought was the wall. It was a heap of Sambos who had come over the

wall; and of four men who clung to my legs like serpents, one who clung to my right leg was Christian George King.

"Yup, so-jeer," says he, "Christian George King, sar, berry glad so-jeer a prisoner. Christian George King been waiting for so-jeer sech long time. Yup, yup!"

What could I do, with five-and-twenty of them on me, but be tied hand and foot? So I was tied hand and foot. It was all over now—boats not come back—all lost! When I was fast bound and was put up against the wall, the one-eyed English convict came up with the Portuguese captain to have a look at me.

"See!" says he. "Here's the determined man! If you had slept sounder last night, you'd have slept your soundest last night, my determined man."

The Portuguese captain laughed in a cool way, and, with the flat of his cutlass, hit me crosswise, as if I was the bough of a tree that he played with: first on the face, and then across the chest and the wounded arm. I looked him steady in the face without tumbling while he looked at me, I am happy to say; but, when they went away, I fell, and lay there.

The sun was up when I was roused and told to come down to the beach and be embarked. I was full of aches and pains, and could not at first remember; but I remembered quite soon enough. The killed were lying about all over the place, and the pirates were burying their dead, and taking away their wounded on hastily-made litters, to the back of the island. As for us prisoners, some of

their boats had come round to the usual harbour to carry us off. We looked a wretched few, I thought, when I got down there ; still, it was another sign that we had fought well, and made the enemy suffer.

The Portuguese captain had all the women already embarked in the boat he himself commanded, which was just putting off when I got down. Miss Maryon sat on one side of him, and gave me a moment's look, as full of quiet courage, and pity, and confidence, as if it had been an hour long. On the other side of him was poor little Mrs. Fisher, weeping for her child and her mother. I was shoved into the same boat with Drooce and Packer, and the remainder of our party of marines ; of whom we had lost two privates, besides Charker, my poor, brave comrade. We all made a melancholy passage, under the hot sun, over to the mainland. There we landed in a solitary place, and were mustered on the seasand. Mr. and Mrs. Macey and their children were amongst us, Mr. and Mrs. Pordage, Mr. Kitten, Mr. Fisher, and Mrs. Belltott. We mustered only fourteen men, fifteen women, and seven children. Those were all that remained of the English who had lain down to sleep last night, unsuspecting and happy, on the island of Silver-Store.

[The second chapter of this story was written by Wilkie Collins, and called "The Prison in the Woods." It tells how the prisoners are taken into the interior by the pirate captain, who holds them as surety for the treasure left on the island. He declares that if English ships capture the treasure he will murder the prisoners. The captives, however, manage by means of rafts to make their escape down the river.]

CHAPTER III.

THE RAFTS ON THE RIVER.

WE contrived to keep afloat all that night, and, the stream running strong with us, to glide a long way down the river. But we found the night to be a dangerous time for such navigation, on account of the eddies and rapids, and it was, therefore, settled next day that in future we would bring-to at sunset, and encamp on the shore. As we knew of no boats that the pirates possessed, up at the prison in the woods, we settled always to encamp on the opposite side of the stream, so as to have the breadth of the river between our sleep and them. Our opinion was that if they were acquainted with any near way by land to the mouth of this river, they would come up in force, and retake us or kill us, according as they could; but that if that was not the case, and if the river ran by none of their secret stations, we might escape.

When I say we settled this or that, I do not mean that we planned anything with any confidence as to what might happen an hour hence. So much had happened in one night, and such great changes had been violently and suddenly made in the fortunes of many among us, that we had got better used to uncertainty, in a little while, than I dare say most people do in the course of their lives.

The difficulties we soon got into, through the off-sets and point-currents of the stream, made the likelihood of our being drowned, alone—to say

nothing of our being retaken—as broad and plain as the sun at noonday to all of us. But we all worked hard at managing the rafts, under the direction of the seamen (of our own skill, I think we never could have prevented them from oversetting), and we also worked hard at making good the defects in their first hasty construction—which the water soon found out. While we humbly resigned ourselves to going down, if it was the will of our Father that was in heaven, we humbly made up our minds that we would all do the best that was in us.

And so we held on, gliding with the stream. It drove us to this bank, and it drove us to that bank, and it turned us, and whirled us; but yet it carried us on. Sometimes much too slowly; sometimes much too fast, but yet it carried us on.

My little deaf-and-dumb boy slumbered a good deal now, and that was the case with all the children. They caused very little trouble to any one. They seemed, in my eyes, to get more like one another, not only in quiet manner, but in the face too. The motion of the raft was usually so much the same, the scene was usually so much the same, the sound of the soft wash and ripple of the water was usually so much the same, that they were made drowsy, as they might have been by the constant playing of one tune. Even on the grown people, who worked hard and felt anxiety, the same things produced something of the same effect. Every day was so like the other, that I soon lost count of the days, myself, and had to ask Miss Maryon, for instance, whether this was the third or fourth? Miss Maryon had a pocket-book and pencil, and she kept the log; that is to say, she

entered up a clear little journal of the time, and of the distances our seamen thought we had made, each night.

So, as I say, we kept afloat and glided on. All day long, and every day, the water, and the woods, and sky; all day long, and every day, the constant watching of both sides of the river, and far ahead at every bold turn and sweep it made, for any signs of pirate-boats, or pirate-dwellings. So, as I say, we kept afloat and glided on. The days melting themselves together to that degree, that I could hardly believe my ears when I asked, "How many now, miss?" and she answered, "Seven."

To be sure, poor Mr. Pordage had, by about now, got his diplomatic coat into such a state as never was seen. What with the mud of the river, what with the water of the river, what with the sun, and the dews, and the tearing boughs, and the thickets, it hung about him in discoloured shreds like a mop. The sun had touched him a bit. He had taken to always polishing one particular button, which just held on to his left wrist, and to always calling for stationery. I suppose that man called for pens, ink, and paper, tape, and sealing-wax, upwards of one thousand times in four-and-twenty hours. He had an idea that we should never get out of that river unless we were written out of it in a formal memorandum; and the more we laboured at navigating the rafts, the more he ordered us not to touch them at our peril, and the more he sat and roared for stationery.

Mrs. Pordage, similarly, persisted in wearing her nightcap. I doubt if any one but ourselves who had seen the progress of that article of dress could by

this time have told what it was meant for. It had got so limp and ragged that she couldn't see out of her eyes for it. It was so dirty, that whether it was vegetable-matter out of a swamp, or weeds out of the river, or an old porter's-knot from England, I don't think any new spectator could have said. Yet this unfortunate old woman had a notion that it was not only vastly genteel, but that it was the correct thing as to propriety. And she really did carry herself over the other ladies who had no nightcaps, and who were forced to tie up their hair how they could, in a superior manner that was perfectly amazing.

I don't know what she looked like, sitting in that blessed nightcap, on a log of wood, outside the hut or cabin upon our raft. She would have rather resembled a fortune-teller in one of the picture-books that used to be in the shop windows in my boyhood, except for her stateliness. But, Lord bless my heart, the dignity with which she sat and moped, with her head in that bundle of tatters, was like nothing else in the world! She was not on speaking terms with more than three of the ladies. Some of them had, what she called, "taken precedence" of her—in getting into, or out of, that miserable little shelter!—and others had not called to pay their respects, or something of that kind. So there she sat, in her own state and ceremony, while her husband sat on the same log of wood, ordering us one and all to let the raft go to the bottom, and to bring him stationery.

What with this noise on the part of Mr. Commissioner Pordage, and what with the cries o

Sergeant Drooce on the raft astern (which were sometimes more than Tom Packer could silence) we often made our slow way down the river any thing but quietly. Yet, that it was of great importance that no ears should be able to hear us from the woods on the banks could not be doubted. We were looked for, to a certainty and we might be retaken at any moment. It was an anxious time; it was, indeed, indeed, an anxious time.

On the seventh night of our voyage on the rafts we made fast, as usual, on the opposite side of the river to that from which we had started, in as dark a place as we could pick out. Our little encampment was soon made, and supper was eaten, and the children fell asleep. The watch was set, and every thing made orderly for the night. Such a starlight night, with such blue in the sky, and such black in the places of heavy shade on the banks of the great stream!

Those two ladies, Miss Maryon and Mrs. Fisher had always kept near me since the night of the attack. Mr. Fisher, who was untiring in the work of our raft, had said to me—

“My dear little childless wife has grown so attached to you, Davis, and you are such a gentle fellow, as well as such a determined one”—our party had adopted that last expression from the one-eyed English pirate, and I repeat what Mr. Fisher said only because he said it—“that it takes a load off my mind to leave her in your charge.”

I said to him, “Your lady is in far better charge than mine, sir, having Miss Maryon to take care

of her ; but you may rely upon it, that I will guard them both—faithful and true.”

Says he, “I do rely upon it, Davis, and I heartily wish all the silver on our old island was yours.”

That seventh starlight night, as I have said, we made our camp, and got our supper, and set our watch, and the children fell asleep. It was solemn and beautiful in those wild and solitary parts, to see them, every night before they lay down, kneeling under the bright sky, saying their little prayers at women’s laps. At that time we men all uncovered, and mostly kept at a distance. When the innocent creatures rose up, we murmured “Amen!” all together. For, though we had not heard what they said, we knew it must be good for us.

At that time, too, as was only natural, those poor mothers in our company whose children had been killed shed many tears. I thought the sight seemed to console them while it made them cry ; but whether I was right or wrong in that, they wept very much. On this seventh night, Mrs. Fisher had cried for her lost darling until she cried herself asleep. She was lying on a little couch of leaves and such-like (I made the best little couch I could for them every night), and Miss Maryon had covered her, and sat by her, holding her hand. The stars looked down upon them. As for me, I guarded them.

“Davis!” says Miss Maryon. (I am not going to say what a voice she had. I couldn’t if I tried.)

“I am here, miss.”

“The river sounds as if it were swollen to-night.”

“We all think, miss, that we are coming near the sea.”

"Do you believe, now, we shall escape?"

"I do now, miss, really believe it." I had always said I did; but I had in my own mind been doubtful.

"How glad you will be, my good Davis, to see England again!"

I have another confession to make that will appear singular. When she said these words, something rose in my throat; and the stars I looked away at seemed to break into sparkles that fell down my face and burned it.

"England is not much to me, miss, except as a name."

"Oh, so true an Englishman should not say that!—Are you not well to-night, Davis?" Very kindly, and with a quick change.

"Quite well, miss."

"Are you sure? Your voice sounds altered in my hearing."

"No, miss, I am a stronger man than ever. But England is nothing to me."

Miss Maryon sat silent for so long a while that I believed she had done speaking to me for one time. However, she had not; for by and by she said in a distinct, clear tone—

"No, good friend; you must not say that England is nothing to you. It is to be much to you yet—everything to you. You have to take back to England the good name you have earned here, and the gratitude and attachment and respect you have won here; and you have to make some good English girl very happy and proud by marrying her; and I shall one day see her, I hope, and make her happier and prouder still, by telling her what noble services

her husband's were in South America, and what a noble friend he was to me there."

Though she spoke these kind words in a cheering manner, she spoke them compassionately. I said nothing. It will appear to be another strange confession, that I paced to and fro, within call, all that night, a most unhappy man, reproaching myself all the night long. "You are as ignorant as any man alive; you are as obscure as any man alive; you are as poor as any man alive; you are no better than the mud under your foot." That was the way in which I went on against myself until the morning.

With the day came the day's labour. What I should have done without the labour I don't know. We were afloat again at the usual hour, and were again making our way down the river. It was broader, and clearer of obstructions than it had been, and it seemed to flow faster. This was one of Drooce's quiet days; Mr. Pordage, besides being sulky, had almost lost his voice; and we made good way, and with little noise.

There was always a seaman forward on the raft, keeping a bright lookout. Suddenly, in the full heat of the day, when the children were slumbering, and the very trees and reeds appeared to be slumbering, this man—it was Shot—holds up his hand, and cries with great caution, "Avast! Voices ahead!"

We held on against the stream as soon as we could bring her up, and the other raft followed suit. At first, Mr. Macey, Mr. Fisher, and myself, could hear nothing; though both the seamen aboard of us agreed that they could hear voices and oars. After a little pause, however, we united in thinking

that we *could* hear the sound of voices and the dip of oars. But you can hear a long way in those countries, and there was a bend of the river before us, and nothing was to be seen except such waters and such banks as we were now in the eighth day (and might, for the matter of our feelings, have been in the eightieth) of having seen with anxious eyes.

It was soon decided to put a man ashore, who should creep through the wood, see what was coming, and warn the rafts. The rafts, in the meantime, to keep the middle of the stream. The man to be put ashore, and not to swim ashore, as the first thing could be more quickly done than the second. The raft conveying him, to get back into mid-stream, and to hold on along with the other, as well as it could, until signalled by the man. In case of danger, the man to shift for himself until it should be safe to take him on board again. I volunteered to be the man.

We knew that the voices and oars must come up slowly against the stream; and our seamen knew, by the set of the stream, under which bank they would come. I was put ashore accordingly. The raft got off well, and I broke into the wood.

Steaming hot it was, and a tearing place to get through. So much the better for me, since it was something to contend against and do. I cut off the bend of the river, at a great saving of space, came to the water's edge again, and hid myself, and waited. I could now hear the dip of the oars very distinctly; the voices had ceased.

The sound came on in a regular tune, and as I

lay hidden, I fancied the tune so played to be, "Chris'en — George — King! Chris'en — George — King! Chris'en — George — King!" over and over again, always the same, with the pauses always at the same places. I had likewise time to make up my mind that if these were the pirates, I could and would (barring my being shot) swim off to my raft, in spite of my wound, the moment I had given the alarm, and hold my old post by Miss Maryon.

"Chris'en—George—King! Chris'en—George—King! Chris'en—George—King!" coming up, now, very near.

I took a look at the branches about me, to see where a shower of bullets would be most likely to do me least hurt; and I took a look back at the track I had made in forcing my way in; and now I was wholly prepared and fully ready for them.

"Chris'en—George—King! Chris'en—George—King! Chris'en—George—King!" Here they were!

Who were they? The barbarous pirates, scum of all nations, headed by such men as the hideous little Portuguese monkey, and the one-eyed English convict with the gash across his face, that ought to have gashed his wicked head off? The worst men in the world picked out from the worst, to do the cruellest and most atrocious deeds that ever stained it? The howling, murdering, black-flag-waving, mad, and drunken crowd of devils that had overcome us by numbers and by treachery? No. These were Englishmen in English boats—good blue-jackets and red-coats—marines that I knew myself, and sailors that knew our seamen! At the helm of the first boat, Captain Carton, eager and

steady. At the helm of the second boat, Captain Maryon, brave and bold. At the helm of the third boat, an old seaman, with determination carved into his watchful face, like the figure-head of a ship. Every man doubly and trebly armed from head to foot. Every man lying-to at his work, with a will that had all his heart and soul in it. Every man looking out for any trace of friend or enemy, and burning to be the first to do good or avenge evil. Every man with his face on fire when he saw me, his countryman who had been taken prisoner, and hailed me with a cheer, as Captain Carton's boat ran in and took me on board.

I reported, "All escaped, sir! All well, all safe, all here!"

God bless me—and God bless them—what a cheer! It turned me weak, as I was passed on from hand to hand to the stern of the boat; every hand patting me or grasping me in some way or other, in the moment of my going by.

"Hold up, my brave fellow," says Captain Carton, clapping me on the shoulder like a friend, and giving me a flask. "Put your lips to that, and they'll be red again. Now, boys, give way!"

The banks flew by us as if the mightiest stream that ever ran was with us; and so it was, I am sure, meaning the stream to those men's ardour and spirit. The banks flew by us, and we came in sight of the rafts—the banks flew by us, and we came alongside of the rafts—the banks stopped; and there was a tumult of laughing and crying, and kissing and shaking of hands, and catching up of children and setting of them down again, and a wild hurry of

thankfulness and joy that melted every one and softened all hearts.

I had taken notice, in Captain Carton's boat, that there was a curious and quite new sort of fitting on board. It was a kind of a little bower made of flowers, and it was set up behind the captain, and betwixt him and the rudder. Not only was this arbour, so to call it, neatly made of flowers, but it was ornamented in a singular way. Some of the men had taken the ribbons and buckles off their hats and hung them among the flowers; others had made festoons and streamers of their handkerchiefs and hung them there; others had intermixed such trifles as bits of glass and shining fragments of locketts and tobacco-boxes with the flowers; so that altogether it was a very bright and lively object in the sunshine. But why there, or what for, I did not understand.

Now, as soon as the first bewilderment was over, Captain Carton gave the order to land for the present. But this boat of his, with two hands left in her, immediately put off again when the men were out of her, and kept off, some yards from the shore. As she floated there, with the two hands gently backing water to keep her from going down the stream, this pretty little arbour attracted many eyes. None of the boat's crew, however, had anything to say about it, except that it was the captain's fancy.

The captain—with the women and children clustering round him, and the men of all ranks grouped outside them, and all listening—stood telling how the expedition, deceived by its bad intelligence, had

chased the light pirate-boats all that fatal night, and had still followed in their wake next day, and had never suspected until many hours too late that the great pirate body had drawn off in the darkness when the chase began, and shot over to the island. He stood telling how the expedition, supposing the whole array of armed boats to be ahead of it, got tempted into shallows and went aground; but not without having its revenge upon the two decoy-boats, both of which it had come up with, overhand, and sent to the bottom with all on board. He stood telling how the expedition, fearing then that the case stood as it did, got afloat again, by great exertion, after the loss of four more tides, and returned to the island, where they found the sloop scuttled and the treasure gone. He stood telling how my officer, Lieutenant Linderwood, was left upon the island, with as strong a force as could be got together hurriedly from the mainland, and how the three boats we saw before us were manned and armed and had come away, exploring the coast and inlets, in search of any tidings of us. He stood telling all this, with his face to the river; and, as he stood telling it, the little harbour of flowers floated in the sunshine before all the faces there.

Leaning on Captain Carton's shoulder, between him and Miss Maryon, was Mrs. Fisher, her head drooping on her arm. She asked him, without raising it, when he had told so much, whether he had found her mother?

"Be comforted! She lies," said the captain gently, "under the cocoa-nut trees on the beach."

"And my child, Captain Carton, did you find

my child too? Does my darling rest with my mother?"

"No. Your pretty child sleeps," said the captain, "under a shade of flowers."

His voice shook; but there was something in it that struck all the hearers. At that moment there sprang from the arbour in his boat a little creature, clapping her hands and stretching out her arms, and crying, "Dear papa! Dear mamma! I am not killed. I am saved. I am coming to kiss you. Take me to them, take me to them, good, kind sailors!"

Nobody who saw that scene has ever forgotten it, I am sure, or ever will forget it. The child had kept quite still, where her brave grandmamma had put her (first whispering in her ear, "Whatever happens to me, do not stir, my dear!"), and had remained quiet until the fort was deserted; she had then crept out of the trench, and gone into her mother's house; and there, alone on the solitary island, in her mother's room, and asleep on her mother's bed, the captain had found her. Nothing could induce her to be parted from him after he took her up in his arms, and he had brought her away with him, and the men had made the bower for her. To see those men now was a sight. The joy of the women was beautiful; the joy of those women who had lost their own children was quite sacred and divine; but the ecstasies of Captain Carton's boat's crew, when their pet was restored to her parents, were wonderful for the tenderness they showed in the midst of roughness. As the captain stood with the child in his arms, and the child's own little arms now clinging round his

neck, now round her father's, now round her mother's, now round some one who pressed up to kiss her, the boat's crew shook hands with one another, waved their hats over their heads, laughed, sang, cried, danced—and all among themselves, without wanting to interfere with anybody—in a manner never to be represented. At last, I saw the coxswain and another, two very hard-faced men, with grizzled heads, who had been the heartiest of the hearty all along, close with one another, get each of them the other's head under his arm, and pommel away at it with his fist as hard as he could, in his excess of joy.

When we had well rested and refreshed ourselves—and very glad we were to have some of the heartening things to eat and drink that had come up in the boats—we recommenced our voyage down the river; rafts, and boats, and all. I said to myself, it was a very different kind of voyage now from what it had been; and I fell into my proper place and station among my fellow-soldiers.

But, when we halted for the night, I found that Miss Maryon had spoken to Captain Carton concerning me. For the captain came straight up to me, and says he, "My brave fellow, you have been Miss Maryon's bodyguard all along, and you shall remain so. Nobody shall supersede you in the distinction and pleasure of protecting that young lady." I thanked his honour in the fittest words I could find, and that night I was placed on my old post of watching the place where she slept. More than once in the night I saw Captain Carton come out into the air, and stroll about there, to see that all was well. I have now this other singular confession to make, that

I saw him with a heavy heart. Yes ; I saw him with a heavy, heavy heart.

In the daytime I had the like post in Captain Carton's boat. I had a special station of my own, behind Miss Maryon, and no hands but hers ever touched my wound. (It has been healed these many long years, but no other hands have ever touched it.) Mr. Pordage was kept tolerably quiet now, with pen and ink, and began to pick up his senses a little. Seated in the second boat, he made documents with Mr. Kitten pretty well all day ; and he generally handed in a protest about something whenever we stopped. The captain, however, made so very light of these papers, that it grew into a saying among the men, when one of them wanted a match for his pipe, "Hand us over a protest, Jack !" As to Mrs. Pordage, she still wore the nightcap, and she now had cut all the ladies on account of her not having been formally and separately rescued by Captain Carton before anybody else. The end of Mr. Pordage, to bring to an end all I know about him, was, that he got great compliments at home for his conduct on these trying occasions, and that he died of yellow jaundice, a governor and a K.C.B.

Sergeant Drooce had fallen from a high fever into a low one. Tom Packer—the only man who could have pulled the sergeant through it—kept hospital aboard the old raft, and Mrs. Belltott, as brisk as ever again (but the spirit of that little woman, when things tried it, was not equal to appearances), was head-nurse under his directions. Before we got down to the Mosquito coast, the joke had been made by one of our men that we should

see her gazetted Mrs. Tom Packer, *vice* Belltott exchanged.

When we reached the coast, we got native boats as substitutes for the rafts; and we rowed along under the land; and in that beautiful climate, and upon that beautiful water, the blooming days were like enchantment. Ah! They were running away, faster than any sea or river, and there was no tide to bring them back. We were coming very near the settlement where the people of Silver-Store were to be left, and from which we marines were under orders to return to Belize.

Captain Carton had, in the boat by him, a curious long-barrelled Spanish gun, and he had said to Miss Maryon one day that it was the best of guns, and had turned his head to me, and said—

“Gill Davis, load her fresh with a couple of slugs, against a chance of showing how good she is.”

So I had discharged the gun over the sea, and had loaded her, according to orders, and there it had lain at the captain's feet, convenient to the captain's hand.

The last day but one of our journey was an uncommonly hot day. We started very early; but there was no cool air on the sea as the day got on, and by noon the heat was really hard to bear, considering that there were women and children to bear it. Now we happened to open, just at that time, a very pleasant little cove or bay, where there was a deep shade from a great growth of trees. Now the captain, therefore, made the signal to the other boats to follow him in and lie by awhile.

The men who were off duty went ashore, and lay

down, but were ordered, for caution's sake, not to stray, and to keep within view. The others rested on their oars, and dozed. Awnings had been made of one thing and another, in all the boats, and the passengers found it cooler to be under them in the shade, when there was room enough, than to be in the thick woods. So the passengers were all afloat, and mostly sleeping. I kept my post behind Miss Maryon, and she was on Captain Carton's right in the boat, and Mrs. Fisher sat on her right again. The captain had Mrs. Fisher's daughter on his knee. He and the two ladies were talking about the pirates, and were talking softly; partly, because people do talk softly under such indolent circumstances, and partly because the little girl had gone off asleep.

I think I have before given it out for my lady to write down, that Captain Carton had a fine bright eye of his own. All at once he darted me a side look, as much as to say, "Steady—don't take on—I see something!"—and gave the child into her mother's arms. That eye of his was so easy to understand, that I obeyed it by not so much as looking either to the right or to the left out of a corner of my own, or changing my attitude the least trifle. The captain went on talking in the same mild and easy way; but began—with his arms resting across his knees, and his head a little hanging forward, as if the heat were rather too much for him—began to play with the Spanish gun.

"They had laid their plans, you see," says the captain, taking up the Spanish gun across his knees, and looking, lazily, at the inlaying on the stock, "with a great deal of art; and the corrupt or

blundering local authorities were so easily deceived"—he ran his left hand idly along the barrel, but I saw, with my breath held, that he covered the action of cocking the gun with his right—"so easily deceived, that they summoned us out to come into the trap. But my intention as to future operations——" In a flash the Spanish gun was at his bright eye, and he fired.

All started up; innumerable echoes repeated the sound of the discharge; a cloud of bright-coloured birds flew out of the woods screaming; a handful of leaves were scattered in the place where the shot had struck; a crackling of branches was heard; and some lithe but heavy creature sprang into the air, and fell forward, head down, over the muddy bank.

"What is it?" cries Captain Maryon from his boat. All silent then, but the echoes rolling away.

"It is a traitor and a spy," said Captain Carton, handing me the gun to load again. "And I think the other name of the animal is Christian George King!"

Shot through the heart. Some of the people ran round to the spot, and drew him out, with the slime and wet trickling down his face; but his face itself would never stir any more to the end of time.

"Leave him hanging to that tree," cried Captain Carton; his boat's crew giving way, and he leaping ashore. "But first into this wood, every man in his place. And boats! Out of gunshot!"

It was a quick change, well meant and well made, though it ended in disappointment. No pirates were there; no one but the spy was found. It was supposed that the pirates, unable to retake us, and

expecting a great attack upon them to be the consequence of our escape, had made from the ruins in the forest, taken to their ship along with the treasure, and left the spy to pick up what intelligence he could. In the evening we went away, and he was left hanging to the tree, all alone, with the red sun making a kind of a dead sunset on his black face.

Next day we gained the settlement on the Mosquito coast for which we were bound. Having stayed there to refresh seven days, and having been much commended, and highly spoken of, and finely entertained, we marines stood under orders to march from the town-gate (it was neither much of a town nor much of a gate) at five in the morning.

My officer had joined us before then. When we turned out at the gate, all the people were there; in the front of them all those who had been our fellow-prisoners, and all the seamen.

"Davis," says Lieutenant Linderwood. "Stand out, my friend!"

I stood out from the ranks, and Miss Maryon and Captain Carton came up to me.

"Dear Davis," says Miss Maryon, while the tears fell fast down her face, "your grateful friends, in most unwillingly taking leave of you, ask the favour that, while you bear away with you their affectionate remembrance, which nothing can ever impair, you will also take this purse of money—far more valuable to you, we all know, for the deep attachment and thankfulness with which it is offered, than for its own contents, though we hope those may prove useful to you, too, in after life."

I got out, in answer, that I thankfully accepted the

attachment and affection, but not the money. Captain Carton looked at me very attentively, and stepped back, and moved away. I made him my bow as he stepped back, to thank him for being so delicate.

"No, miss," said I, "I think it would break my heart to accept of money. But, if you could condescend to give to a man so ignorant and common as myself, any little thing you have worn—such as a bit of ribbon——"

She took a ring from her finger, and put it in my hand. And she rested her hand in mine, while she said these words—

"The brave gentlemen of old—but not one of them was braver, or had a nobler nature than you—took such gifts from ladies, and did all their good actions for the givers' sakes. If you will do yours for mine, I shall think with pride that I continue to have some share in the life of a gallant and generous man."

For the second time in my life she kissed my hand. I made so bold, for the first time, as to kiss hers; and I tied the ring at my breast, and I fell back to my place.

Then the horse-litter went out at the gate with Sergeant Drooce in it; and the horse-litter went out at the gate with Mrs. Belltott in it; and Lieutenant Linderwood gave the word of command, "Quick march!" and, cheered and cried for, we went out of the gate too, marching along the level plain towards the serene blue sky, as if we were marching straight to heaven.

When I have added here that the pirate scheme was blown to shivers by the pirate-ship which had the treasure on board being so vigorously attacked

by one of his Majesty's cruisers, among the West India Keys, and being so swiftly boarded and carried that nobody suspected anything about the scheme until three-fourths of the pirates were killed, and the other fourth were in irons, and the treasure was recovered, I come to the last singular confession I have got to make.

It is this. I well knew what an immense and hopeless distance there was between me and Miss Maryon; I well knew that I was no fitter company for her than I was for the angels; I well knew that she was as high above my reach as the sky over my head; and yet I loved her. What put it in my low heart to be so daring, or whether such a thing ever happened before or since, as that a man so uninstructed and obscure as myself got his unhappy thoughts lifted up to such a height, while knowing very well how presumptuous and impossible to be realised they were, I am unable to say; still, the suffering to me was just as great as if I had been a gentleman. I suffered agony—agony. I suffered hard, and I suffered long. I thought of her last words to me, however, and I never disgraced them. If it had not been for those dear words I think I should have lost myself in despair and recklessness.

The ring will be found lying on my heart, of course, and will be laid with me wherever I am laid. I am getting on in years now, though I am able and hearty. I was recommended for promotion, and everything was done to reward me that could be done; but my total want of all learning stood in my way, and I found myself so completely out of the road to it, that I could not conquer any learning

though I tried. I was long in the service, and I **respected it**, and was respected in it, and the service is dear to me at this present hour.

At this present hour, when I give this out to my lady to be written down, all my old pain has softened away, and I am as happy as a man can be, at this present fine old country-house of Admiral Sir George Carton, Baronet. It was my Lady Carton who herself sought me out, over a great many miles of the wide world, and found me in hospital wounded, and brought me here. It is my Lady Carton who writes down my words. My lady was Miss Maryon. And now that I conclude what I had to tell, I see my lady's honoured gray hair droop over her face, as she leans a little lower at her desk ; and I fervently thank her for being so tender, as I see she is, towards the past pain and trouble of her poor, old, faithful, **humble soldier**.

Sketches of Young Gentlemen.

TO THE YOUNG LADIES

OF THE

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;

..... ALSO

THE YOUNG LADIES

OF

The Principality of Wales,

AND LIKEWISE

THE YOUNG LADIES

RESIDENT IN THE ISLES OF

Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark,

THE HUMBLE DEDICATION OF THEIR DEVOTED ADMIRER,

SHEWETH,—

THAT your Dedicator has perused, with feelings of virtuous indignation, a work purporting to be “Sketches of Young Ladies”; written by Quiz, illustrated by Phiz, and published in one volume, square twelvemo.

THAT after an attentive and vigilant perusal of the said work, your Dedicator is humbly of opinion that so many libels, upon your Honourable sex, were never contained in any previously published work, in twelvemo or any other mo.

THAT in the title-page and preface to the said work, your Honourable sex are described and classified as animals; and although your Dedicator is not at present prepared to deny that you *are* animals, still he humbly submits that it is not polite to call you so.

THAT in the aforesaid preface, your Honourable sex are also described as Troglodites, which, being a hard word, may, for aught your Honourable sex or your Dedicator can say to the contrary, be an injurious and disrespectful appellation.

THAT the author of the said work applied himself to his task in malice prepense and with wickedness aforethought ; a fact which, your Dedicator contends, is sufficiently demonstrated by his assuming the name of Quiz, which, your Dedicator submits, denotes a foregone conclusion, and implies an intention of quizzing.

THAT in the execution of his evil design, the said Quiz, or author of the said work, must have betrayed some trust or confidence reposed in him by some members of your Honourable sex, otherwise he never could have acquired so much information relative to the manners and customs of your Honourable sex in general.

THAT actuated by these considerations, and further moved by various slanders and insinuations respecting your Honourable sex contained in the said work, square twelvemo, entitled "Sketches of Young Ladies," your Dedicator ventures to produce another work, square twelvemo, entitled "Sketches of Young Gentlemen," of which he now solicits your acceptance and approval.

THAT as the Young Ladies are the best companions of the Young Gentlemen, so the Young Gentlemen should be the best companions of the Young Ladies ; and extending the comparison from animals (to quote the disrespectful language of the said Quiz) to inanimate objects, your Dedicator humbly suggests, that

such of your Honourable sex as purchased the bane should possess themselves of the antidote, and that those of your Honourable sex who were not rash enough to take the first, should lose no time in swallowing the last—prevention being in all cases better than cure, as we are informed upon the authority, not only of general acknowledgment, but also of traditionary wisdom.

THAT with reference to the said bane and antidote, your Dedicator has no further remarks to make, than are comprised in the printed directions issued with Doctor Morison's pills; namely, that whenever your Honourable sex take twenty-five of Number 1, you will be pleased to take fifty of Number 2, without delay.

And your Dedicator shall ever pray, etc.

Sketches of Young Gentlemen.

THE BASHFUL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

WE found ourselves seated at a small dinner-party the other day, opposite a stranger of such singular appearance and manner, that he irresistibly attracted our attention.

This was a fresh-coloured young gentleman, with as good a promise of light whisker as one might wish to see, and possessed of a very velvet-like, soft-looking countenance. We do not use the latter term invidiously, but merely to denote a pair of smooth, plump, highly-coloured cheeks of capacious dimensions, and a mouth rather remarkable for the fresh hue of the lips than for any marked or striking expression it presented. His whole face was suffused with a crimson blush, and bore that downcast, timid, retiring look, which betokens a man ill at ease with himself.

There was nothing in these symptoms to attract more than a passing remark, but our attention had been originally drawn to the bashful young gentleman, on his first appearance in the drawing-room above-stairs, into which he was no sooner introduced, than making his way towards us who were standing in a window, and wholly neglecting several persons who warmly accosted him, he seized our hand with visible emotion, and pressed it with a convulsive grasp for a good couple of minutes, after which he dived in a nervous manner across the room, oversetting in his way a fine little girl of six years and a quarter old—

and shrouding himself behind some hangings, was seen no more, until the eagle eye of the hostess detecting him in his concealment, on the announcement of dinner, he was requested to pair off with a lively single lady of two or three and thirty.

This most flattering salutation from a perfect stranger would have gratified us not a little as a token of his having held us in high respect, and for that reason been desirous of our acquaintance, if we had not suspected from the first, that the young gentleman, in making a desperate effort to get through the ceremony of introduction, had, in the bewilderment of his ideas, shaken hands with us at random. This impression was fully confirmed by the subsequent behaviour of the bashful young gentleman in question, which we noted particularly, with the view of ascertaining whether we were right in our conjecture.

The young gentleman seated himself at table with evident misgivings, and turning sharp round to pay attention to some observation of his loquacious neighbour, overset his bread. There was nothing very bad in this, and if he had had the presence of mind to let it go, and say nothing about it, nobody but the man who had laid the cloth would have been a bit the wiser ; but the young gentleman, in various semi-successful attempts to prevent its fall, played with it a little, as gentlemen in the streets may be seen to do with their hats on a windy day, and then giving the roll a smart rap in his anxiety to catch it, knocked it with great adroitness into a tureen of white soup at some distance, to the unspeakable terror and disturbance of a very amiable bald

gentleman, who was dispensing the contents. We thought the bashful young gentleman would have gone off in an apoplectic fit, consequent upon the violent rush of blood to his face at the occurrence of this catastrophe.

From this moment we perceived, in the phraseology of the fancy, that it was "all up" with the bashful young gentleman, and so indeed it was. Several benevolent persons endeavoured to relieve his embarrassment by taking wine with him, but finding that it only augmented his sufferings, and that after mingling sherry, champagne, hock, and moselle together, he applied the greater part of the mixture externally, instead of internally, they gradually dropped off, and left him to the exclusive care of the talkative lady, who, not noting the wildness of his eye, firmly believed she had secured a listener. He broke a glass or two in the course of the meal, and disappeared shortly afterwards; it is inferred that he went away in some confusion, inasmuch as he left the house in another gentleman's coat and the footman's hat.

This little incident led us to reflect upon the most prominent characteristics of bashful young gentlemen in the abstract; and as this portable volume will be the great text-book of young ladies in all future generations, we record them here for their guidance and behoof.

If the bashful young gentleman, in turning a street corner, chance to stumble suddenly upon two or three young ladies of his acquaintance, nothing can exceed his confusion and agitation. His first impulse is to make a great variety of bows, and dart past them,

which he does until, observing that they wish to stop, but are uncertain whether to do so or not, he makes several feints of returning, which causes them to do the same; and at length, after a great quantity of unnecessary dodging and falling up against the other passengers, he returns and shakes hands most affectionately with all of them, in doing which he knocks out of their grasp sundry little parcels, which he hastily picks up, and returns very muddy and disordered. The chances are that the bashful young gentleman then observes it is very fine weather, and being reminded that it has only just left off raining for the first time these three days, he blushes very much, and smiles as if he had said a very good thing. The young lady who was most anxious to speak, here inquires, with an air of great commiseration, how his dear sister Harriet is to-day; to which the young gentleman, without the slightest consideration, replies with many thanks, that she is remarkably well. "Well, Mr. Hopkins!" cries the young lady; "why, we heard she was bled yesterday evening, and have been perfectly miserable about her." "Oh, ah," says the young gentleman, "so she was. Oh, she's very ill, very ill indeed." The young gentleman then shakes his head, and looks very desponding (he has been smiling perpetually up to this time), and after a short pause, gives his glove a great wrench at the wrist, and says, with a strong emphasis on the adjective, "*Good-morning, good-morning.*" And making a great number of bows in acknowledgment of several little messages to his sister, walks backward a few paces, and comes with great violence against a lamp-post, knocking his hat off in the

contact, which in his mental confusion and bodily pain he is going to walk away without, until a great roar from a carter attracts his attention, when he picks it up, and tries to smile cheerfully to the young ladies, who are looking back, and who, he has the satisfaction of seeing, are all laughing heartily.

At a quadrille party, the bashful young gentleman always remains as near the entrance of the room as possible, from which position he smiles at the people he knows as they come in, and sometimes steps forward to shake hands with more intimate friends: a process which, on each repetition, seems to turn him a deeper scarlet than before. He declines dancing the first set or two, observing, in a faint voice, that he would rather wait a little; but at length is absolutely compelled to allow himself to be introduced to a partner, when he is led, in a great heat and blushing furiously, across the room to a spot where half a dozen unknown ladies are congregated together.

“Miss Lambert, let me introduce Mr. Hopkins for the next quadrille.” Miss Lambert inclines her head graciously. Mr. Hopkins bows, and his fair conductress disappears, leaving Mr. Hopkins, as he too well knows, to make himself agreeable. The young lady more than half expects that the bashful young gentleman will say something, and the bashful young gentleman feeling this, seriously thinks whether he has got anything to say, which, upon mature reflection, he is rather disposed to conclude he has not, since nothing occurs to him. Meanwhile, the young lady, after several inspections of her *bouquet*, all made in the expectation that the bashful young

gentleman is going to talk, whispers her mamma, who is sitting next her, which whisper the bashful young gentleman immediately suspects (and possibly with very good reason) must be about *him*. In this comfortable condition he remains until it is time to "stand up," when murmuring a "Will you allow me?" he gives the young lady his arm, and after inquiring where she will stand, and receiving a reply that she has no choice, conducts her to the remotest corner of the quadrille, and making one attempt at conversation, which turns out a desperate failure, preserves a profound silence until it is all over, when he walks her twice round the room, deposits her in her old seat, and retires in confusion.

A married bashful gentleman—for these bashful gentlemen *do* get married sometimes; how it is ever brought about is a mystery to us—a married bashful gentleman either causes his wife to appear bold by contrast, or merges her proper importance in his own insignificance. Bashful young gentlemen should be cured or avoided. They are never hopeless, and never will be, while female beauty and attractions retain their influence; as any young lady will find, who may think it worth while on this confident assurance to take a patient in hand.

THE OUT-AND-OUT YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

OUT-AND-OUT young gentlemen may be divided into two classes—those who have something to do, and those who have nothing. I shall commence with the former, because that species come more frequently

under the notice of young ladies, whom it is our province to warn and to instruct.

The out-and-out young gentleman is usually no great dresser, his instructions to his tailor being all comprehended in the one general direction to "make that what's-a-name a regular bang-up sort of thing." For some years past, the favourite costume of the out-and-out young gentleman has been a rough pilot coat, with two gilt hooks and eyes to the velvet collar; buttons somewhat larger than crown-pieces; a black or fancy neckerchief, loosely tied; a wide-brimmed hat, with a low crown; tightish inexpressibles, and iron-shod boots. Out of doors he sometimes carries a large ash-stick, but only on special occasions, for he prefers keeping his hands in his coat pockets. He smokes at all hours, of course, and swears considerably.

The out-and-out young gentleman is employed in a city counting-house or solicitor's office, in which he does as little as he possibly can: his chief places of resort are the streets, the taverns, and the theatres. In the streets at evening time, out-and-out young gentlemen have a pleasant custom of walking six or eight abreast, thus driving females and other in-offensive persons into the road, which never fails to afford them the highest satisfaction, especially if there be any immediate danger of their being run over, which enhances the fun of the thing materially. In all places of public resort, the out-and-outers are careful to select each a seat to himself, upon which he lies at full length, and (if the weather be very dirty, but not in any other case) he lies with his knees up, and the soles of his boots planted firmly on the

cushion, so that if any low fellow should ask him to make room for a lady, he takes ample revenge upon her dress, without going at all out of his way to do it. He always sits with his hat on, and flourishes his stick in the air while the play is proceeding, with a dignified contempt of the performance; if it be possible for one or two out-and-out young gentlemen to get up a little crowding in the passages, they are quite in their element, squeezing, pushing, whooping, and shouting in the most humorous manner possible. If they can only succeed in irritating the gentleman who has a family of daughters under his charge, they are like to die with laughing, and boast of it among their companions for a week afterwards, adding, that one or two of them were "devilish fine girls," and that they really thought the youngest would have fainted, which was the only thing wanted to render the joke complete.

If the out-and-out young gentleman have a mother and sisters, of course he treats them with becoming contempt, inasmuch as they (poor things!) having no notion of life or gaiety, are far too weak-spirited and moping for him. Sometimes, however, on a birthday or at Christmas-time, he cannot very well help accompanying them to a party at some old friend's, with which view he comes home when they have been dressed an hour or two, smelling very strongly of tobacco and spirits, and after exchanging his rough coat for some more suitable attire (in which, however, he loses nothing of the out-and-outer), gets into the coach and grumbles all the way at his own good nature: his bitter reflections aggravated by the recollection that Tom

Smith has taken the chair at a little impromptu dinner at a fighting man's, and that a set-to was to take place on a dining-table, between the fighting man and his brother-in-law, which is probably "coming off" at that very instant.

As the out-and-out young gentleman is by no means at his ease in ladies' society, he shrinks into a corner of the drawing-room when they reach the friend's, and unless one of his sisters is kind enough to talk to him, remains there without being much troubled by the attentions of other people, until he espies, lingering outside the door, another gentleman, whom he at once knows, by his air and manner (for there is a kind of freemasonry in the craft), to be a brother out-and-outer, and towards whom he accordingly makes his way. Conversation being soon opened by some casual remark, the second out-and-outer confidentially informs the first, that he is one of the rough sort and hates that kind of thing, only he couldn't very well be off coming; to which the other replies, that that's just his case—"and I'll tell you what," continues the out-and-outer in a whisper, "I should like a glass of warm brandy and water just now,"—"Or a pint of stout and a pipe," suggests the other out-and-outer.

The discovery is at once made that they are sympathetic souls; each of them says at the same moment, that he sees the other understands what's what: and they become fast friends at once, more especially when it appears that the second out-and-outer is no other than a gentleman, long favourably known to his familiars as "Mr. Warmint Blake," who upon divers occasions has distinguished himself

in a manner that would not have disgraced the fighting man, and who—having been a pretty long time about town—had the honour of once shaking hands with the celebrated Mr. Thurtell himself.

At supper, these gentlemen greatly distinguish themselves, brightening up very much when the ladies leave the table, and proclaiming aloud their intention of beginning to spend the evening—a process which is generally understood to be satisfactorily performed, when a great deal of wine is drunk and a great deal of noise made, both of which feats the out-and-out young gentlemen execute to perfection. Having protracted their sitting until long after the host and the other guests have adjourned to the drawing-room, and finding that they have drained the decanters empty, they follow them thither with complexions rather heightened, and faces rather bloated with wine; and the agitated lady of the house whispers her friends as they waltz together, to the great terror of the whole room, that “both Mr. Blake and Mr. Dummins are very nice sort of young men in their way, only they are eccentric persons, and unfortunately *rather too wild!*”

The remaining class of out-and-out young gentlemen is composed of persons who, having no money of their own and a soul above earning any, enjoy similar pleasures, nobody knows how. These respectable gentlemen, without aiming quite so much at the out-and-out in external appearance, are distinguished by all the same amiable and attractive characteristics, in an equal or perhaps greater degree, and now and then find their way into society, through the medium of the other class of out-and-out young

gentlemen, who will sometimes carry them home, and who usually pay their tavern bills. As they are equally gentlemanly, clever, witty, intelligent, wise, and well-bred, we need scarcely have recommended them to the peculiar consideration of the young ladies, if it were not that some of the gentle creatures whom we hold in such high respect, are perhaps a little too apt to confound a great many heavier terms with the light word eccentricity, which we beg them henceforth to take in a strictly Johnsonian sense, without any liberality or latitude of construction.

THE VERY FRIENDLY YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

We know—and all people know—so many specimens of this class, that in selecting the few heads our limits enable us to take from a great number, we have been induced to give the very friendly young gentleman the preference over many others, to whose claims upon a more cursory view of the question we had felt disposed to assign the priority.

The very friendly young gentleman is very friendly to everybody, but he attaches himself particularly to two, or at most to three families; regulating his choice by their dinners, their circle of acquaintances, or some other criterion in which he has an immediate interest. He is of any age between twenty and forty, unmarried of course, must be fond of children, and is expected to make himself generally useful if possible. Let us illustrate our meaning by an example, which is the shortest mode and the clearest.

We encountered one day, by chance, an old friend of whom we had lost sight for some years, and who—expressing a strong anxiety to renew our former intimacy—urged us to dine with him on an early day, that we might talk over old times. We readily assented, adding that we hoped we should be alone. “Oh, certainly, certainly,” said our friend, “not a soul with us but Mincin.” “And who is Mincin?” was our natural inquiry. “Oh, don’t mind him,” replied our friend, “he’s a most particular friend of mine, and a very friendly fellow you will find him ;” and so he left us.

We thought no more about Mincin until we duly presented ourselves at the house next day, when, after a hearty welcome, our friend motioned towards a gentleman who had been previously showing his teeth by the fireplace, and gave us to understand that it was Mr. Mincin, of whom he had spoken. It required no great penetration on our part to discover at once that Mr. Mincin was in every respect a very friendly young gentleman.

“I am delighted,” said Mincin, hastily advancing, and pressing our hand warmly between both of his, “I am delighted, I am sure, to make your acquaintance—(here he smiled)—very much delighted indeed—(here he exhibited a little emotion)—I assure you that I have looked forward to it anxiously for a very long time :” here he released our hands, and rubbing his own, observed that the day was severe, but that he was delighted to perceive from our appearance that it agreed with us wonderfully ; and then went on to observe that, notwithstanding the coldness of the weather, he had that morning seen in the paper an

exceedingly curious paragraph, to the effect that there was now in the garden of Mr. Wilkins of Chichester, a pumpkin, measuring four feet in height, and eleven feet seven inches in circumference, which he looked upon as a very extraordinary piece of intelligence. We ventured to remark, that we had a dim recollection of having once or twice before observed a similar paragraph in the public prints, upon which Mr. Mincin took us confidentially by the button, and said, Exactly, exactly, to be sure, we were very right, and he wondered what the editors meant by putting in such things. Who the deuce, he should like to know, did they suppose cared about them? that struck him as being the best of it.

The lady of the house appeared shortly afterwards, and Mr. Mincin's friendliness, as will readily be supposed, suffered no diminution in consequence; he exerted much strength and skill in wheeling a large easy-chair up to the fire, and the lady being seated in it, carefully closed the door, stirred the fire, and looked to the windows to see that they admitted no air; having satisfied himself upon all these points, he expressed himself quite easy in his mind, and begged to know how she found herself to-day. Upon the lady's replying Very well, Mr. Mincin (who it appeared was a medical gentleman) offered some general remarks upon the nature and treatment of colds in the head, which occupied us agreeably until dinner-time. During the meal, he devoted himself to complimenting everybody, not forgetting himself, so that we were an uncommonly agreeable quartette.

"I'll tell you what, Capper," said Mr. Mincin to our host, as he closed the room door after the lady

had retired, "you have very great reason to be fond of your wife. Sweet woman, Mrs. Capper, sir!" "Nay, Mincin—I beg," interposed the host, as we were about to reply that Mrs. Capper unquestionably was particularly sweet. "Pray, Mincin, don't." "Why not?" exclaimed Mr. Mincin, "why not? Why should you feel any delicacy before your old friend—*our* old friend, if I may be allowed to call you so, sir; why should you, I ask?" We of course wished to know why he should also, upon which our friend admitted that Mrs. Capper *was* a very sweet woman, at which admission Mr. Mincin cried "Bravo!" and begged to propose Mrs. Capper with heartfelt enthusiasm, whereupon our host said, "Thank you, Mincin," with deep feeling; and gave us, in a low voice, to understand that Mincin had saved Mrs. Capper's cousin's life no less than fourteen times in a year and a half, which he considered no common circumstance—an opinion to which we most cordially subscribed.

Now that we three were left to entertain ourselves with conversation, Mr. Mincin's extreme friendliness became every moment more apparent; he was so amazingly friendly, indeed, that it was impossible to talk about anything in which he had not the chief concern. We happened to allude to some affairs in which our friend and we had been mutually engaged nearly fourteen years before, when Mr. Mincin was all at once reminded of a joke which our friend had made on that day four years, which he positively must insist upon telling—and which he did tell accordingly, with many pleasant recollections of what he said, and what Mrs. Capper said, and how he

well remembered that they had been to the play with orders on the very night previous, and had seen *Romeo and Juliet*, and the pantomime, and how Mrs. Capper being faint had been led into the lobby, where she smiled, said it was nothing after all, and went back again, with many other interesting and absorbing particulars: after which the friendly young gentleman went on to assure us, that our friend had experienced a marvellously prophetic opinion of that same pantomime, which was of such an admirable kind, that two morning papers took the same view next day: to this our friend replied, with a little triumph, that in that instance he had some reason to think he had been correct, which gave the friendly young gentleman occasion to believe that our friend was always correct; and so we went on, until our friend, filling a bumper, said he must drink one glass to his dear friend Mincin, than whom he would say no man saved the lives of his acquaintances more, or had a more friendly heart. Finally, our friend having emptied his glass, said, "God bless you, Mincin"—and Mr. Mincin and he shook hands across the table with much affection and earnestness.

But great as the friendly young gentleman is, in a limited scene like this, he plays the same part on a larger scale with increased *éclat*. Mr. Mincin is invited to an evening party with his dear friends the Martins, where he meets his dear friends the Cappers, and his dear friends the Watsons, and a hundred other dear friends too numerous to mention. He is as much at home with the Martins as with the Cappers; but how exquisitely he balances his attentions, and divides them among his dear friends!

If he flirts with one of the Miss Watsons, he has one little Martin on the sofa pulling his hair, and the other little Martin on the carpet riding on his foot. He carries Mrs. Watson down to supper on one arm, and Miss Martin on the other, and takes wine so judiciously, and in such exact order, that it is impossible for the most punctilious old lady to consider herself neglected. If any young lady, being prevailed upon to sing, become nervous afterwards, Mr. Mincin leads her tenderly into the next room, and restores her with port wine, which she must take medicinally. If any gentleman be standing by the piano during the progress of the ballad, Mr. Mincin seizes him by the arm at one point of the melody, and softly beating time the while with his head, expresses in dumb show his intense perception of the delicacy of the passage. If anybody's self-love is to be flattered, Mr. Mincin is at hand. If anybody's overweening vanity is to be pampered, Mr. Mincin will surfeit it. What wonder that people of all stations and ages recognise Mr. Mincin's friendliness; that he is universally allowed to be handsome as amiable; that mothers think him an oracle, daughters a dear, brothers a beau, and fathers a wonder! And who would not have the reputation of the very friendly young gentleman?

THE MILITARY YOUNG GENTLEMAN

WE are rather at a loss to imagine how it has come to pass that military young gentlemen have obtained so much favour in the eyes of the young ladies of this kingdom. We cannot think so lightly of them as to suppose that the mere circumstance of a man's wearing a red coat ensures him a ready passport to their regard ; and even if this were the case, it would be no satisfactory explanation of the circumstance, because, although the analogy may in some degree hold good in the case of mail coachmen and guards, still general postmen wear red coats, and *they* are not to our knowledge better received than other men ; nor are firemen either, who wear (or used to wear) not only red coats, but very resplendent and massive badges besides—much larger than epaulettes. Neither do the twopenny post-office boys, if the result of our inquiries be correct, find any peculiar favour in woman's eyes, although they wear very bright red jackets, and have the additional advantage of constantly appearing in public on horseback, which last circumstance may be naturally supposed to be greatly in their favour.

We have sometimes thought that this phenomenon may take its rise in the conventional behaviour of captains and colonels and other gentlemen in red coats on the stage, where they are invariably represented as fine, swaggering fellows, talking of nothing but charming girls, their king and country, their honour, and their debts, and crowing over the inferior classes of the community, whom they

occasionally treat with a little gentlemanly swindling, no less to the improvement and pleasure of the audience, than to the satisfaction and approval of the choice spirits who consort with them. But we will not devote these pages to our speculations upon the subject, inasmuch as our business at the present moment is not so much with the young ladies who are bewitched by her Majesty's livery as with the young gentlemen whose heads are turned by it. For "heads" we had written "brains"; but upon consideration, we think the former the more appropriate word of the two.

These young gentlemen may be divided into two classes—young gentlemen who are actually in the army, and young gentlemen who, having an intense and enthusiastic admiration for all things appertaining to a military life, are compelled by adverse fortune or adverse relations to wear out their existence in some ignoble counting-house. We will take this latter description of military young gentlemen first.

The whole heart and soul of the military young gentleman are concentrated in his favourite topic. There is nothing that he is so learned upon as uniforms; he will tell you, without faltering for an instant, what the habiliments of any one regiment are turned up with, what regiment wear stripes down the outside and inside of the leg, and how many buttons the Tenth had on their coats; he knows to a fraction how many yards and odd inches of gold lace it takes to make an ensign in the Guards; is deeply read in the comparative merits of different bands, and the appareling of trumpeters; and is very luminous indeed in descanting upon "crack regiments," and

the "crack" gentlemen who compose them, of whose mightiness and grandeur he is never tired of telling.

We were suggesting to a military young gentleman only the other day, after he had related to us several dazzling instances of the profusion of half a dozen honourable ensign somebodies or nobodies in the articles of kid gloves and polished boots, that possibly "cracked" regiments would be an improvement upon "crack," as being a more expressive and appropriate designation, when he suddenly interrupted us by pulling out his watch, and observing that he must hurry off to the park in a cab, or he would be too late to hear the band play. Not wishing to interfere with so important an engagement, and being in fact already slightly overwhelmed by the anecdotes of the honourable ensigns aforementioned, we made no attempt to detain the military young gentleman, but parted company with ready good-will.

Some three or four hours afterwards, we chanced to be walking down Whitehall, on the Admiralty side of the way, when, as we drew near to one of the little stone places in which a couple of horse soldiers mount guard in the daytime, we were attracted by the motionless appearance and eager gaze of a young gentleman, who was devouring both man and horse with his eyes, so eagerly, that he seemed deaf and blind to all that was passing around him. We were not much surprised at the discovery that it was our friend, the military young gentleman, but we *were* a little astonished when we returned from a walk to South Lambeth to find him still there, looking on with the same intensity as before. As it was a very windy day, we felt bound to awaken the young

gentlemen from his reverie, when he inquired of us with great enthusiasm, whether "that was not a glorious spectacle," and proceeded to give us a detailed account of the weight of every article of the spectacle's trappings, from the man's gloves to the horse's shoes.

We have made it a practice since, to take the Horse Guards in our daily walk, and we find it is the custom of military young gentlemen to plant themselves opposite the sentries, and contemplate them at leisure in periods varying from fifteen minutes to fifty, and averaging twenty-five. We were much struck a day or two since, by the behaviour of a very promising young butcher who (evincing an interest in the service, which cannot be too strongly commended or encouraged), after a prolonged inspection of the sentry, proceeded to handle his boots with great curiosity, and as much composure and indifference as if the man were wax-work.

But the really military young gentleman is waiting all this time, and at the very moment that an apology rises to our lips, he emerges from the barrack gate (he is quartered in a garrison town), and takes the way towards the High Street. He wears his undress uniform, which somewhat mars the glory of his outward man; but still how great, how grand, he is! What a happy mixture of ease and ferocity in his gait and carriage, and how lightly he carries that dreadful sword under his arm, making no more ado about it than if it were a silk umbrella! The lion is sleeping: only think if an enemy were in sight, how soon he'd whip it out of the scabbard, and what a terrible fellow he would be!

But he walks on, thinking of nothing less than

blood and slaughter ; and now he comes in sight of three other military young gentlemen, arm-in-arm, who are bearing down towards him, clanking their iron heels on the pavement, and clashing their swords with a noise, which should cause all peaceful men to quail at heart. They stop to talk. See how the flaxen-haired young gentleman with the weak legs—he who has his pocket-handkerchief thrust into the breast of his coat—glares upon the faint-hearted civilians who linger to look upon his glory ; how the next young gentleman elevates his head in the air, and majestically places his arms akimbo, while the third stands with his legs very wide apart, and clasps his hands behind him. Well may we inquire—not in familiar jest, but in respectful earnest—if you call that nothing. Oh ! if some encroaching foreign power—the Emperor of Russia, for instance, or any of those desp fellows, could only see those military young gentlemen as they move on together towards the billiard-room over the way, wouldn't he tremble a little !

And then, at the theatre at night, when the performances are by command of Colonel Fitz-Sordust and the officers of the garrison—what a splendid sight it is ! How sternly the defenders of their country look round the house as if in mute assurance to the audience that they may make themselves comfortable regarding any foreign invasion, for they (the military young gentlemen) are keeping a sharp look-out, and are ready for anything. And what a contrast between them, and that stage-box full of gray-headed officers with tokens of many battles about them, who have nothing at all in common with the military young

gentlemen, and who—but for an old-fashioned kind of manly dignity in their looks and bearing—might be common hard-working soldiers for anything they take the pains to announce to the contrary!

Ah! here is a family just come in who recognise the flaxen-headed young gentleman; and the flaxen-headed young gentleman recognises them too, only he doesn't care to show it just now. Very well done indeed! He talks louder to the little group of military young gentlemen who are standing by him, and coughs to induce some ladies in the next box but one to look round, in order that their faces may undergo the same ordeal of criticism to which they have subjected, in not a wholly inaudible tone, the majority of the female portion of the audience. Oh! a gentleman in the same box looks round as if he were disposed to resent this as an impertinence; and the flaxen-headed young gentleman sees his friends at once, and hurries away to them with the most charming cordiality.

Three young ladies, one young man, and the mamma of the party, receive the military young gentleman with great warmth and politeness, and in five minutes afterwards the military young gentleman, stimulated by the mamma, introduces the two other military young gentlemen with whom he was walking in the morning, who take their seats behind the young ladies and commence conversation; whereat the mamma bestows a triumphant bow upon a rival mamma, who has not succeeded in decoying any military young gentlemen, and prepares to consider her visitors from that moment three of the most elegant and superior young gentlemen in the whole world.

THE POLITICAL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

ONCE upon a time—not in the days when pigs drank wine, but in a more recent period of our history—it was customary to banish politics when ladies were present. If this usage still prevailed, we should have had no chapter for political young gentlemen, for ladies would have neither known nor cared what kind of monster a political young gentleman was. But as this good custom in common with many others has “gone out,” and left no word when it is likely to be home again; as political young ladies are by no means rare, and political young gentleman the very reverse of scarce, we are bound in the strict discharge of our most responsible duty not to neglect this natural division of our subject.

If the political young gentleman be resident in a country town (and there *are* political young gentlemen in country towns sometimes) he is wholly absorbed in his politics. As a pair of purple spectacles communicate the same uniform tint to all objects near and remote, so the political glasses, with which the young gentleman assists his mental vision, give to everything the hue and tinge of party feeling. The political young gentleman would as soon think of being struck with the beauty of a young lady in the opposite interest, as he would dream of marrying his sister to the opposite member.

If the political young gentleman be a Conservative, he has usually some vague ideas about Ireland and the Pope which he cannot very clearly explain, but which he knows are the right sort of thing, and not

to be very easily got over by the other side. He has also some choice sentences regarding church and state, culled from the banners in use at the last election, with which he intersperses his conversation at intervals with surprising effect. But his great topic is the constitution, upon which he will declaim, by the hour together, with much heat and fury; not that he has any particular information on the subject, but because he knows that the constitution is somehow church and state, and church and state somehow the constitution, and that the fellows on the other side say it isn't, which is quite a sufficient reason for him to say it is, and to stick to it.

Perhaps his greatest topic of all, though, is the people. If a fight takes place in a populous town, in which many noses are broken, and a few windows, the young gentleman throws down the newspaper with a triumphant air, and exclaims, "Here's your precious people!" if half a dozen boys run across the course at race time, when it ought to be kept clear, the young gentleman looks indignantly round, and begs you to observe the conduct of the people; if the gallery demand a hornpipe between the play and the after-piece, the same young gentleman cries "No" and "Shame" till he is hoarse, and then inquires, with a sneer, what you think of popular moderation *now*; in short, the people form a never-failing theme for him; and when the attorney, on the side of his candidate, dwells upon it with great power of eloquence at election time, as he never fails to do, the young gentleman and his friends, and the body they head, cheer with great violence against *the other people*, with whom, of course, they have

no possible connection. In much the same manner the audience at a theatre never fail to be highly amused with any jokes at the expense of the public—always laughing heartily at some other public, and never at themselves.

If the political young gentleman be a Radical, he is usually a very profound person indeed, having great store of theoretical questions to put to you, with an infinite variety of possible cases and logical deductions therefrom. If he be of the utilitarian school, too, which is more than probable, he is particularly pleasant company, having many ingenious remarks to offer upon the voluntary principle and various cheerful disquisitions connected with the population of the country, the position of Great Britain in the scale of nations, and the balance of power. Then he is exceedingly well versed in all doctrines of political economy as laid down in the newspapers, and knows a great many parliamentary speeches by heart; nay, he has a small stock of aphorisms, none of them exceeding a couple of lines in length, which will settle the toughest question and leave you nothing to say. He gives all the young ladies to understand that Miss Martineau is the greatest woman that ever lived; and when they praise the good looks of Mr. Hawkins the new member, says he's very well for a representative, all things considered, but he wants a little calling to account, and he is more than half afraid it will be necessary to bring him down on his knees for that vote on the miscellaneous estimates. At this the young ladies express much wonderment, and say surely a Member of Parliament is not to be brought upon

his knees so easily ; in reply to which the political young gentleman smiles sternly, and throws out dark hints regarding the speedy arrival of that day when Members of Parliament will be paid salaries, and required to render weekly accounts of their proceedings, at which the young ladies utter many expressions of astonishment and incredulity, while their lady-mothers regard the prophecy as little else than blasphemous.

It is extremely improving and interesting to hear two political young gentlemen, of diverse opinions, discuss some great question across a dinner-table ; such as whether, if the public were admitted to Westminster Abbey for nothing, they would or would not convey small chisels and hammers in their pockets, and immediately set about chipping all the noses off the statues ; or whether, if they once got into the Tower for a shilling, they would not insist upon trying the crown on their own heads, and loading and firing off all the small arms in the armoury, to the great discomposure of Whitechapel and the Minories. Upon these, and many other momentous questions which agitate the public mind in these desperate days, they will discourse with great vehemence and irritation for a considerable time together, both leaving off precisely where they began, and each thoroughly persuaded that he has got the better of the other.

In society, at assemblies, balls, and playhouses, these political young gentlemen are perpetually on the watch for a political allusion, or anything which can be tortured or construed into being one ; when, thrusting themselves into the very smallest openings

for there favourite discourse, they fall upon the unhappy company tooth and nail. They have recently had many favourable opportunities of opening in churches, but as there the clergyman has it all his own way, and must not be contradicted, whatever politics he preaches, they are fain to hold their tongues until they reach the outer door, though at the imminent risk of bursting in the effort.

As such discussions can please nobody but the talkative parties concerned, we hope they will henceforth take the hint and discontinue them, otherwise we now give them warning, that the ladies have our advice to discountenance such talkers altogether.

THE DOMESTIC YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

LET us make a slight sketch of our amiable friend, Mr. Felix Nixon. We are strongly disposed to think, that if we put him in this place, he will answer our purpose without another word of comment.

Felix, then, is a young gentleman who lives at home with his mother, just within the twopenny post-office circle of three miles from St. Martin-le-Grand. He wears india-rubber goloshes when the weather is at all damp, and always has a silk handkerchief neatly folded up in the right-hand pocket of his greatcoat to tie over his mouth when he goes home at night; moreover, being rather nearsighted, he carries spectacles for particular occasions, and has a weakish, tremulous voice, of which he makes great use, for he talks as much as any old lady breathing.

The two chief subjects of Felix's discourse, are himself and his mother, both of whom would appear to be very wonderful and interesting persons. As Felix and his mother are seldom apart in body, so Felix and his mother are scarcely ever separate in spirit. If you ask Felix how he finds himself to-day, he prefaces his reply with a long and minute bulletin of his mother's state of health; and the good lady in her turn, edifies her acquaintance with a circumstantial and alarming account, how he sneezed four times and coughed once after being out in the rain the other night, but having his feet promptly put into hot water, and his head into a flannel-something, which we will not describe more particularly than by this delicate allusion, was happily brought round by the next morning, and enabled to go to business as usual.

Our friend is not a very adventurous or hot-headed person, but he has passed through many dangers, as his mother can testify. There is one great story in particular, concerning a hackney coachman who wanted to overcharge him one night for bringing them home from the play, upon which Felix gave the aforesaid coachman a look which his mother thought would have crushed him to the earth, but which did not crush him quite, for he continued to demand another sixpence, notwithstanding that Felix took out his pocket-book, and, with the aid of a flat candle, pointed out the fare in print, which the coachman obstinately disregarding, he shut the street-door with a slam which his mother shudders to think of; and then, roused to the most appalling pitch of passion by the coachman knocking a double knock to

show that he was by no means convinced, he broke with uncontrollable force from his parent and the servant girl, and running into the street without his hat, actually shook his fist at the coachman, and came back again with a face as white, Mrs. Nixon says, looking about her for a simile, as white as that ceiling. She never will forget his fury that night, never!

To this account Felix listens with a solemn face, occasionally looking at you to see how it affects you, and when his mother has made an end of it, adds that he looked at every coachman he met for three weeks afterwards, in hopes that he might see the scoundrel; whereupon Mrs. Nixon, with an exclamation of terror, requests to know what he would have done to him if he *had* seen him, at which Felix smiling darkly and clenching his right fist, she exclaims, "Goodness gracious!" with a distracted air, and insists upon extorting a promise that he never will on any account do anything so rash, which her dutiful son—it being something more than three years since the offence was committed—reluctantly concedes, and his mother, shaking her head prophetically, fears with a sigh that his spirit will lead him into something violent yet. The discourse then, by an easy transition, turns upon the spirit which glows within the bosom of Felix, upon which point Felix himself becomes eloquent, and relates a thrilling anecdote of the time when he used to sit up till two o'clock in the morning reading French, and how his mother used to say, "Felix, you will make yourself ill. I know you will;" and how *he* used to say, "Mother, I don't care—I will do it;" and how at last his mother

privately procured a doctor to come and see him, who declared, the moment he felt his pulse, that if he had gone on reading one night more—only one night more—he must have put a blister on each temple, and another between his shoulders ; and who, as it was, sat down upon the instant, and writing a prescription for a blue pill, said it must be taken immediately, or he wouldn't answer for the consequences. The recital of these and many other moving perils of the like nature, constantly harrows up the feelings of Mr. Nixon's friends.

Mrs. Nixon has a tolerably extensive circle of female acquaintance, being a good-humoured, talkative, bustling little body, and to the unmarried girls among them she is constantly vaunting the virtues of her son, hinting that she will be a very happy person who wins him, but that they must mind their p's and q's, for he is very particular, and terribly severe upon young ladies. At this last caution the young ladies resident in the same row, who happen to be spending the evening there, put their pocket-handkerchiefs before their mouths, and are troubled with a short cough ; just then Felix knocks at the door, and his mother drawing the tea-table nearer the fire, calls out to him as he takes off his boots in the back parlour that he needn't mind coming in in his slippers, for there are only the two Misses Grey and Miss Thompson, and she is quite sure they will excuse *him*, and nodding to the two Misses Grey, she adds, in a whisper, that Julia Thompson is a great favourite with Felix, at which intelligence the short cough comes again, and Miss Thompson in particular is greatly troubled with it, till Felix coming in, very faint for

want of his tea, changes the subject of discourse, and enables her to laugh out boldly and tell Amelia Grey not to be so foolish. Here they all three laugh, and Mrs. Nixon says they are giddy girls; in which stage of the proceedings, Felix, who has by this time refreshed himself with the grateful herb that "cheers but not inebriates," removes his cup from his countenance and says with a knowing smile, that all girls are; whereat his admiring mamma pats him on the back and tells him not to be sly, which calls forth a general laugh from the young ladies, and another smile from Felix, who, thinking he looks very sly indeed, is perfectly satisfied.

Tea being over, the young ladies resume their work, and Felix insists upon holding a skein of silk while Miss Thompson winds it on a card. This process having been performed to the satisfaction of all parties, he brings down his flute in compliance with a request from the youngest Miss Grey, and plays divers tunes out of a very small music-book till supper-time, when he is very facetious and talkative indeed. Finally, after half a tumblerful of warm sherry and water, he gallantly puts on his goloshes over his slippers, and telling Miss Thompson's servant to run on first and get the door open, escorts that young lady to her house, five doors off; the Misses Grey, who live in the next house but one, stopping to peep with merry faces from their own door till he comes back again, when they call out, "Very well, Mr. Felix," and trip into the passage, with a laugh more musical than any flute that was ever played.

Felix is rather prim in his appearance, and perhaps a little priggish about his books and flute, and so

forth, which have all their peculiar corners of peculiar shelves in his bedroom; indeed all his female acquaintance (and they are good judges) have long ago set him down as a thorough old bachelor. He is a favourite with them, however, in a certain way, as an honest, inoffensive, kind-hearted creature; and as his peculiarities harm nobody, not even himself, we are induced to hope that many who are not personally acquainted with him will take our good word in his behalf, and be content to leave him to a long continuance of his harmless existence.

THE CENSORIOUS YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

THERE is an amiable kind of young gentleman going about in society, upon whom, after much experience of him, and considerable turning over of the subject in our mind, we feel it our duty to affix the above appellation. Young ladies mildly call him a "sarcastic" young gentleman, or a "severe" young gentleman. We, who know better, beg to acquaint them with the fact, that he is merely a censorious young gentleman, and nothing else.

The censorious young gentleman has the reputation among his familiars of a remarkably clever person, which he maintains by receiving all intelligence and expressing all opinions with a dubious sneer, accompanied with a half smile, expressive of anything you please but good-humour. This sets people about thinking what on earth the censorious young gentleman means, and they speedily arrive at the

conclusion that he means something very deep indeed; for they reason in this way—"This young gentleman looks so very knowing that he must mean something, and as I am by no means a dull individual, what a very deep meaning he must have if I can't find it out!" It is extraordinary how soon a censorious young gentleman may make a reputation in his own small circle if he bear this in his mind, and regulate his proceedings accordingly.

As young ladies are generally—not curious, but laudably desirous to acquire information, the censorious young gentleman is much talked about among them, and many surmises are hazarded regarding him. "I wonder," exclaims the eldest Miss Greenwood, laying down her work to turn up the lamp, "I wonder whether Mr. Fairfax will ever be married." "Bless me, dear," cries Miss Marshall, "whatever made you think of him?" "Really, I hardly know," replies Miss Greenwood; "he is such a very mysterious person, that I often wonder about him." "Well, to tell you the truth," replies Miss Marshall, "and so do I." Here two other young ladies profess that they are constantly doing the like, and all present appear in the same condition except one young lady, who, not scrupling to state that she considers Mr. Fairfax "a horror," draws down all the opposition of the others, which having been expressed in a great many ejaculatory passages, such as "Well, did I ever!"—and "Lor, Emily, dear!" she takes up the subject, and gravely states, that she must say she does not think Mr. Fairfax by any means a horror, but rather takes him to be a young man of very great ability; "and I am

quite sure," adds the worthy lady, "he always means a great deal more than he says."

The door opens at this point of the discourse, and who of all people alive walks into the room, but the very Mr. Fairfax, who has been the subject of conversation! "Well, it really is curious," cries ma, "we were at that very moment talking about you." "You did me great honour," replies Mr. Fairfax; "may I venture to ask what you were saying?" "Why, if you must know," returns the eldest girl, "we were remarking what a very mysterious man you are." "Ay, ay!" observes Mr. Fairfax, "indeed!" Now Mr. Fairfax says this ay, ay, and indeed, which are slight words enough in themselves, with so very unfathomable an air, and accompanies them with such a very equivocal smile, that ma and the young ladies are more than ever convinced that he means an immensity, and so tell him he is a very dangerous man, and seems to be always thinking ill of somebody, which is precisely the sort of character the censorious young gentleman is most desirous to establish; wherefore he says, "Oh, dear, no," in a tone, obviously intended to mean, "You have me there," and which gives them to understand that they have hit the right nail on the very centre of its head.

When the conversation ranges from the mystery overhanging the censorious young gentleman's behaviour, to the general topics of the day, he sustains his character to admiration. He considers the new tragedy well enough *for* a new tragedy, but Lord bless us—well, no matter; he could say a great deal on that point, but he would rather not, lest he should be thought ill-natured, as he knows he would

be. "But is not Mr. So-and-So's performance truly charming?" inquires a young lady. "Charming!" replies the censorious young gentleman. "Oh, dear, yes, certainly; very charming—oh, very charming indeed." After this, he stirs the fire, smiling contemptuously all the while; and a modest young gentleman, who has been a silent listener, thinks what a great thing it must be to have such a critical judgment. Of music, pictures, books, and poetry, the censorious young gentleman has an equally fine conception. As to men and women, he can tell all about them at a glance. "Now let us hear your opinion of young Mrs. Barker," says some great believer in the powers of Mr. Fairfax, "but don't be too severe." "I never am severe," replies the censorious young gentleman. "Well, never mind that now. She is very lady-like, is she not?" "Lady-like!" repeats the censorious young gentleman (for he always repeats when he is at a loss for anything to say). "Did you observe her manner? Bless my heart and soul, Mrs. Thompson, did you observe her manner?—that's all I ask." "I thought I had done so," rejoins the poor lady, much perplexed; "I did not observe it very closely perhaps." "Oh, not very closely," rejoins the censorious young gentleman triumphantly. "Very good; then *I* did. Let us talk no more about her." The censorious young gentleman purses up his lips, and nods his head sagely, as he says this; and it is forthwith whispered about, that Mr. Fairfax (who, though he is a little prejudiced, must be admitted to be a very excellent judge) has observed something exceedingly odd in Mrs. Barker's manner.

THE FUNNY YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

As one funny young gentleman will serve as a sample of all funny young gentlemen, we purpose merely to note down the conduct and behvaieur of an individual specimen of this class whom we happened to meet at an annual family Christmas party in the course of this very last Christmas that ever came.

We were all seated round a blazing fire which crackled pleasantly as the guests talked merrily and the urn steamed cheerily—for, being an old-fashioned party, there *was* an urn, and a teapot besides—when there came a postman's knock at the door, so violent and sudden, that it startled the whole circle, and actually caused two or three very interesting and most unaffected young ladies to scream aloud and to exhibit many afflicting symptoms of terror and distress, until they had been several times assured by their respective adorers, that they were in no danger. We were about to remark that it was surely beyond post-time, and must have been a runaway knock, when our host, who had hitherto been paralysed with wonder, sank into a chair in a perfect ecstasy of laughter, and offered to lay twenty pounds that it was that droll dog Griggins. He had no sooner said this, than the majority of the company and all the children of the house burst into a roar of laughter too, as if some inimitable joke flashed upon them simultaneously, and gave vent to various exclamations of—To be sure it must be Griggins, and How like him that was, and What spirits he was always in! with many other commendatory remarks of the like nature.

Not having the happiness to know Griggins, we became extremely desirous to see so pleasant a fellow, the more especially as a stout gentleman with a powdered head, who was sitting with his breeches buckles almost touching the hob, whispered us he was a wit of the first water, when the door opened, and Mr. Griggins being announced, presented himself, amidst another shout of laughter and a loud clapping of hands from the younger branches. This welcome he acknowledged by sundry contortions of countenance, imitative of the clown in one of the new pantomimes, which were so extremely successful, that one stout gentleman rolled upon an ottoman in a paroxysm of delight, protesting, with many gasps, that if somebody didn't make that fellow Griggins leave off, he would be the death of him, he knew. At this the company only laughed more boisterously than before, and as we always like to accommodate our tone and spirit if possible to the humour of any society in which we find ourself, we laughed with the rest, and exclaimed, "Oh! capital, capital!" as loud as any of them.

When he had quite exhausted all beholders, Mr. Griggins received the welcomes and congratulations of the circle, and went through the needful introductions with much ease and many puns. This ceremony over, he avowed his intention of sitting in somebody's lap unless the young ladies made room for him on the sofa, which being done, after a great deal of tittering and pleasantry, he squeezed himself among them, and likened his condition to that of love among the roses. At this novel jest we all roared once more. "You should consider yourself

highly honoured, sir," said we. "Sir," replied Mr. Griggins, "you do me proud." Here everybody laughed again; and the stout gentleman by the fire whispered in our ear that Griggins was making a dead set at us.

The tea-things having been removed, we all sat down to a round game, and here Mr. Griggins shone forth with peculiar brilliancy, abstracting other people's fish, and looking over their hands in the most comical manner. He made one most excellent joke in snuffing a candle, which was neither more nor less than setting fire to the hair of a pale young gentleman who sat next him, and afterwards begging his pardon with considerable humour. As the young gentleman could not see the joke, however, possibly in consequence of its being on the top of his own head, it did not go off quite as well as it might have done; indeed, the young gentleman was heard to murmur some general references to "impertinence," and a "rascal," and to state the number of his lodgings in an angry tone—a turn of the conversation which might have been productive of slaughterous consequences, if a young lady, betrothed to the young gentleman, had not used her immediate influence to bring about a reconciliation; emphatically declaring in an agitated whisper, intended for his peculiar edification but audible to the whole table, that if he went on in that way, she never would think of him otherwise than as a friend, though as that she must always regard him. At this terrible threat the young gentleman became calm, and the young lady, overcome by the revulsion of feeling, instantaneously fainted.

Mr. Griggins's spirits were slightly depressed for a

short period by this unlooked-for result of such a harmless pleasantry, but being promptly elevated by the attentions of the host and several glasses of wine, he soon recovered, and became even more vivacious than before, insomuch that the stout gentleman previously referred to, assured us that although he had known him since he was *that* high (something smaller than a nutmeg-grater), he had never beheld him in such excellent cue.

When the round game and several games at blind-man's buff which followed it were all over, and we were going down to supper, the inexhaustible Mr. Griggins produced a small sprig of mistletoe from his waistcoat pocket, and commenced a general kissing of the assembled females, which occasioned great commotion and much excitement. We observed that several young gentlemen—including the young gentleman with the pale countenance—were greatly scandalised at this indecorous proceeding, and talked very big among themselves in corners; and we observed too, that several young ladies when remonstrated with by the aforesaid young gentlemen, called each other to witness how they had struggled, and protested vehemently that it was very rude, and that they were surprised at Mrs. Brown's allowing it, and that they couldn't bear it, and had no patience with such impertinence. But such is the gentle and forgiving nature of woman, that although we looked very narrowly for it, we could not detect the slightest harshness in the subsequent treatment of Mr. Griggins. Indeed, upon the whole, it struck us that among the ladies he seemed rather more popular than before!

To recount all the drollery of Mr. Griggins at supper, would fill such a tiny volume as this to the very bottom of the outside cover. How he drank out of other people's glasses, and ate of other people's bread, how he frightened into screaming convulsions a little boy who was sitting up to supper in a high chair, by sinking below the table and suddenly reappearing with a mask on; how the hostess was really surprised that anybody could find a pleasure in tormenting children, and how the host frowned at the hostess, and felt convinced that Mr. Griggins had done it with the very best intentions; how Mr. Griggins explained, and how everybody's good-humour was restored but the child's; to tell these and a hundred other things ever so briefly, would occupy more of our room and our readers' patience, than either they or we can conveniently spare. Therefore we change the subject, merely observing that we have offered no description of the funny young gentleman's personal appearance, believing that almost every society has a Griggins of its own, and leaving all readers to supply the deficiency, according to the particular circumstances of their particular case.

THE THEATRICAL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

ALL gentlemen who love the drama—and there are few gentlemen who are not attached to the most intellectual and rational of all our amusements—do not come within this definition. As we have no mean relish for theatrical entertainments ourself, we

are disinterestedly anxious that this should be perfectly understood.

The theatrical young gentleman has early and important information on all theatrical topics. "Well," says he abruptly, when you meet him in the street, "here's a pretty to-do. Flimkins has thrown up his part in the melodrama at the Surrey."—"And what's to be done?" you inquire, with as much gravity as you can counterfeit. "Ah, that's the point," replies the theatrical young gentleman, looking very serious; "Boozle declines it—positively declines it. From all I am told, I should say it was decidedly in Boozle's line, and that he would be very likely to make a great hit in it; but he objects on the ground of Flimkins having been put up in the part first, and says no earthly power shall induce him to take the character. It's a fine part, too—excellent business, I'm told. He has to kill six people in the course of the piece, and to fight over a bridge in red fire, which is as safe a card, you know, as can be. Don't mention it; but I hear that the last scene, when he is first poisoned, and then stabbed by Mrs. Flimkins as Vengedora, will be the greatest thing that has been done these many years." With this piece of news, and laying his finger on his lips as a caution for you not to excite the town with it, the theatrical young gentleman hurries away.

The theatrical young gentleman, from often frequenting the different theatrical establishments, has pet and familiar names for them all. Thus Covent Garden is the garden, Drury Lane the lane, the Victoria the vic, and the Olympic the pic. Actresses,

as Taylor, Nisbett, Faucit, Honey ; that talented and lady-like girl Sheriff, that clever little creature Horton, and so on. In the same manner he prefixes Christian names when he mentions the actors, as Charley Young, Jemmy Buckstone, Fred Yates, Paul Bedford. When he is at a loss for a Christian name, the word "old" applied indiscriminately answers quite as well : as old Charley Matthews at Vestris's, old Harley, and old Braham. He has a great knowledge of the private proceedings of actresses, especially of their getting married, and can tell you in a breath half a dozen who have changed their names without avowing it. Whenever an alteration of this kind is made in the play-bills, he will remind you that he let you into the secret six months ago.

The theatrical young gentleman has a great reverence for all that is connected with the stage department of the different theatres. He would, at any time, prefer going a street or two out of his way, to omitting to pass a stage-entrance, into which he always looks with a curious and searching eye. If he can only identify a popular actor in the street, he is in a perfect transport of delight ; and no sooner meets him than he hurries back, and walks a few paces in front of him, so that he can turn round from time to time, and have a good stare at his features. He looks upon a theatrical-fund dinner as one of the most enchanting festivities ever known ; and thinks that to be a member of the Garrick Club, and see so many actors in their plain clothes, must be one of the highest gratifications the world can bestow.

The theatrical young gentleman is a constant half-price visitor at one or other of the theatres, and has

an infinite relish for all pieces which display the fullest resources of the establishment. He likes to place implicit reliance upon the play-bills when he goes to see a show-piece, and works himself up to such a pitch of enthusiasm, as not only to believe (if the bills say so) that there are three hundred and seventy-five people on the stage at one time in the last scene, but is highly indignant with you, unless you believe it also. He considers that if the stage be opened from the footlights to the back wall, in any new play, the piece is a triumph of dramatic writing, and applauds accordingly. He has a great notion of trap-doors too; and thinks any character going down or coming up a trap (no matter whether he be an angel or a demon—they both do it occasionally) one of the most interesting feats in the whole range of scenic illusion.

Besides these acquirements, he has several veracious accounts to communicate of the private manners and customs of different actors, which, during the pauses of a quadrille, he usually communicates to his partner, or imparts to his neighbour at a supper table. Thus he is advised that Mr. Liston always had a footman in gorgeous livery waiting at the side-scene with a brandy bottle and tumbler, to administer half a pint or so of spirit to him every time he came off, without which assistance he must infallibly have fainted. He knows for a fact that, after an arduous part, Mr. George Bennett is put between two feather beds, to absorb the perspiration; and is credibly informed that Mr. Baker has, for many years, submitted to a course of lukewarm toast-and-water, to qualify him to sustain his favourite characters. He

looks upon Mr. Fitz Ball as the principal dramatic genius and poet of the day ; but holds that there are great writers extant besides him—in proof whereof he refers you to various dramas and melodramas recently produced, of which he takes in all the sixpenny and threepenny editions as fast as they appear.

The theatrical young gentleman is a great advocate for violence of emotion and redundancy of action. If a father has to curse a child upon the stage, he likes to see it done in the thorough-going style, with no mistake about it : to which end it is essential that the child should follow the father on her knees, and be knocked violently over on her face by the old gentleman as he goes into a small cottage, and shuts the door behind him. He likes to see a blessing invoked upon the young lady, when the old gentleman repents, with equal earnestness, and accompanied by the usual conventional forms, which consist of the old gentleman looking anxiously up into the clouds, as if to see whether it rains, and then spreading an imaginary tablecloth in the air over the young lady's head—soft music playing all the while. Upon these, and other points of a similar kind, the theatrical young gentleman is a great critic indeed. He is likewise very acute in judging of natural expressions of the passions, and knows precisely the frown, wink, nod, or leer, which stands for any one of them, or the means by which it may be converted into any other : as jealousy, with a good stamp of the right foot, becomes anger ; or wildness, with the hands clasped before the throat, instead of tearing the wig, is passionate love. If

you venture to express a doubt of the accuracy of any of these portraitures, the theatrical young gentleman assures you, with a haughty smile, that it always has been done in that way, and he supposes they are not going to change it at this time of day to please you; to which, of course, you meekly reply that you suppose not.

There are innumerable disquisitions of this nature, in which the theatrical young gentleman is very profound, especially to ladies whom he is most in the habit of entertaining with them; but as we have no space to recapitulate them at greater length, we must rest content with calling the attention of the young ladies in general to the theatrical young gentlemen of their own acquaintance.

THE POETICAL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

TIME was, and not very long ago either, when a singular epidemic raged among the young gentlemen, vast numbers of whom, under the influence of the malady, tore off their neckerchiefs, turned down their shirt collars, and exhibited themselves in the open streets with bare throats and dejected countenances, before the eyes of an astonished public. These were poetical young gentlemen. The custom was gradually found to be inconvenient, as involving the necessity of too much clean linen and too large washing bills, and these outward symptoms have consequently passed away; but we are disposed to think notwithstanding, that the number of poetical young gentlemen is considerably on the increase.

We know a poetical young gentleman—a very poetical young gentleman. We do not mean to say that he is troubled with the gift of poesy in any remarkable degree, but his countenance is of a plaintive and melancholy cast, his manner is abstracted and bespeaks affliction of soul. He seldom has his hair cut, and often talks about being an outcast and wanting a kindred spirit; from which, as well as from many general observations in which he is wont to indulge, concerning mysterious impulses, and yearnings of the heart, and the supremacy of intellect gilding all earthly things with the glowing magic of immortal verse, it is clear to all his friends that he has been stricken poetical.

The favourite attitude of the poetical young gentleman is lounging on a sofa with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, or sitting bolt upright in a high-backed chair, staring with very round eyes at the opposite wall. When he is in one of these positions, his mother, who is a worthy, affectionate old soul, will give you a nudge to bespeak your attention without disturbing the distracted one, and whisper with a shake of the head, that John's imagination is at some extraordinary work or other, you may take her word for it. Hereupon John looks more fiercely intent upon vacancy than before, and suddenly snatching a pencil from his pocket, puts down three words and a cross on the back of a card, sighs deeply, paces once or twice across the room, inflicts a most unmerciful slap upon his head, and walks moodily up to his dormitory.

The poetical young gentleman is apt to acquire peculiar notions of things too, which plain, ordinary

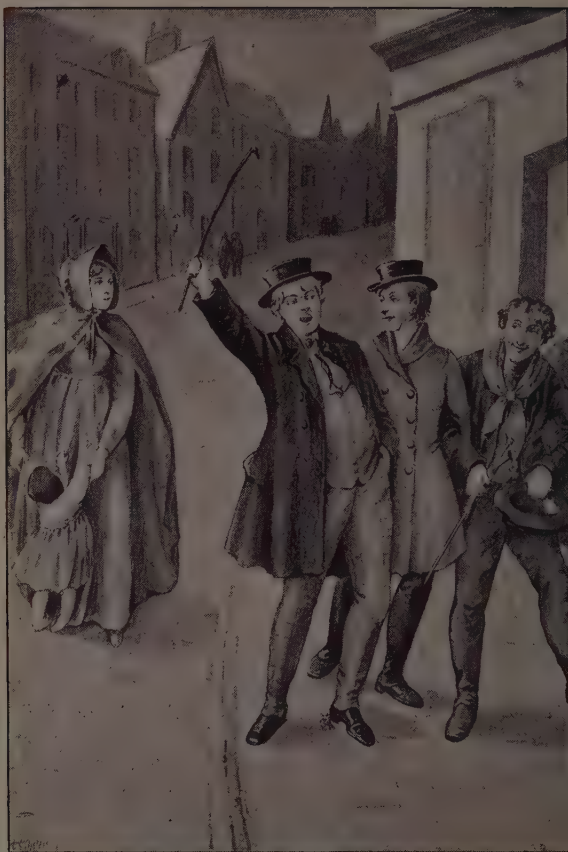
people, unblessed with a poetical obliquity of vision, would suppose to be rather distorted. For instance, when the sickening murder and mangling of a wretched woman was affording delicious food wherewithal to gorge the insatiable curiosity of the public, our friend the poetical young gentleman was in ecstasies—not of disgust, but admiration. “Heavens!” cried the poetical young gentleman, “how grand; how great!” We ventured deferentially to inquire upon whom these epithets were bestowed—our humble thoughts oscillating between the police officer who found the criminal, and the lock-keeper who found the head. “Upon whom!” exclaimed the poetical young gentleman, in a frenzy of poetry—“upon whom should they be bestowed but upon the murderer!”—and thereupon it came out, in a fine torrent of eloquence, that the murderer was a great spirit, a bold creature full of daring and nerve, a man of dauntless heart and determined courage, and withal a great casuist and able reasoner, as was fully demonstrated in his philosophical colloquies with the great and noble of the land. We held our peace, and meekly signified our indisposition to controvert these opinions—firstly, because we were no match at quotation for the poetical young gentleman; and secondly, because we felt it would be of little use our entering into any disputation, if we were; being perfectly convinced that the respectable and immoral hero in question is not the first and will not be the last hanged gentleman upon whom false sympathy or diseased curiosity will be plentifully expended.

This was a stern mystic flight of the poetical young gentleman. In his milder and softer moments, he

occasionally lays down his neckcloth, and pens stanzas, which sometimes find their way into a lady's magazine, or the "Poets' Corner" of some country newspaper; or which, in default of either vent for his genius, adorn the rainbow leaves of a lady's album. These are generally written upon some such occasions as contemplating the Bank of England by midnight, or beholding St. Paul's in a snow-storm; and when these gloomy objects fail to afford him inspiration, he pours forth his soul in a touching address to a violet, or a plaintive lament that he is no longer a child, but has gradually grown up.

The poetical young gentleman is fond of quoting passages from his favourite authors, who are all of the gloomy and desponding school. He has a great deal to say, too, about the world, and is much given to opining, especially if he has taken anything strong to drink, that there is nothing in it worth living for. He gives you to understand, however, that for the sake of society, he means to bear his part in the tiresome play, manfully resisting the gratification of his own strong desire to make a premature exit; and consoles himself with the reflection, that immortality has some chosen nook for himself and the other great spirits whom earth has chafed and wearied.

When the poetical young gentleman makes use of adjectives, they are all superlatives. Everything is of the grandest, greatest, noblest, mightiest, loftiest; or the lowest, meanest, obscurest, vilest, and most pitiful. He knows no medium, for enthusiasm is the soul of poetry; and who so enthusiastic as a poetical young gentleman? "Mr. Milkwash," says a young lady, as she unlocks her album to receive the young



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"It never fails to afford satisfaction."

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gentleman's original impromptu contribution, "how very silent you are! I think you must be in love." "Love!" cries the poetical young gentleman, starting from his seat by the fire and terrifying the cat who tamps off at full speed, "Love! that burning, consuming passion; that ardour of the soul, that force glowing of the heart. Love! The withering, blighting influence of hope misplaced and affection heightened. Love, did you say! Ha! ha! ha!"

With this, the poetical young gentleman laughs a laugh belonging only to poets and Mr. O. Smith of the Adelphi Theatre, and sits down, pen in hand, to scrawl off a page or two of verse in the biting, semi-theistical, demoniac style, which, like the poetical young gentleman himself, is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

THE "THROWING-OFF" YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

THERE is a certain kind of impostor—a bragging, blustering, puffing young gentleman—against whom we are desirous to warn that fairer part of the creation, whom we more peculiarly devote these our labours. And we are particularly induced to lay especial stress on this division of our subject, by a little dialogue held some short time ago with an esteemed young member of our acquaintance, touching a most gross specimen of this class of men. We had been urging the absurdities of his conduct and conversation, and dwelling upon the impossibilities he constantly pointed out—to which indeed we had not scrupled to

prefix a certain hard little word of one syllable and three letters—when our fair friend, unable to maintain the contest any longer, reluctantly cried, “Well; he certainly has a habit of throwing-off, but then——” What then? Throw him off yourself, said we. And so she did, but not at our instance, for other reasons appeared, and it might have been better if she had done so at first.

The throwing-off young gentleman has so often a father possessed of vast property in some remote district of Ireland, that we look with some suspicion upon all young gentlemen who volunteer this description of themselves. The deceased grandfather of the throwing-off young gentleman was a man of immense possessions, and untold wealth; the throwing-off young gentleman remembers, as well as if it were only yesterday, the deceased baronet’s library, with its long rows of scarce and valuable books in superbly embossed bindings, arranged in cases, reaching from the lofty ceiling to the oaken floor; and the fine antique chairs and tables, and the noble old castle of Ballykillbabaloo, with its splendid prospect of hill and dale, and wood, and rich wild scenery, and the fine hunting stables and the spacious courtyards, “and—and—everything upon the same magnificent scale,” says the throwing-off young gentleman, “princely; quite princely. Ah!” And he sighs as if mourning over the fallen fortunes of his noble house.

The throwing-off young gentleman is a universal genius; at walking, running, rowing, swimming, and skating, he is unrivalled; at all games of chance or skill, at hunting, shooting, fishing, riding, driving, or amateur theatricals, no one can touch him—that is

could not, because he gives you carefully to understand, lest there should be any opportunity of testing his skill, that he is quite out of practice just now, and has been for some years. If you mention any beautiful girl of your common acquaintance in his hearing, the throwing-off young gentleman starts, smiles, and begs you not to mind him, for it was quite involuntary: people do say indeed that they were once engaged, but no—although she is a very fine girl, he was so situated at that time that he couldn't possibly encourage the—— “But it's of no use talking about it!” he adds, interrupting himself. “She has got over it now, and I firmly hope and trust is happy.” With this benevolent aspiration he nods his head in a mysterious manner, and whistling the first part of some popular air, thinks perhaps it will be better to change the subject.

There is another great characteristic of the throwing-off young gentleman, which is, that he “happens to be acquainted” with a most extraordinary variety of people in all parts of the world. Thus in all disputed questions, when the throwing-off young gentleman has no argument to bring forward, he invariably happens to be acquainted with some distant person, intimately connected with the subject, whose testimony decides the point against you, to the great—may we say it—to the great admiration of three young ladies out of every four, who consider the throwing-off young gentleman a very highly-connected young man, and a most charming person.

Sometimes the throwing-off young gentleman happens to look in upon a little family circle of young ladies who are quietly spending the evening together,

and then, indeed, is he at the very height and summit of his glory ; for it is to be observed that he by no means shines to equal advantage in the presence of men as in the society of over-credulous young ladies, which is his proper element. It is delightful to hear the number of pretty things the throwing-off young gentleman gives utterance to during tea, and still more so to observe the ease with which, from long practice and study, he delicately blends one compliment to a lady with two for himself. "Did you ever see a more lovely blue than this flower, Mr. Caveton?" asks a young lady, who, truth to tell, is rather smitten with the throwing-off young gentleman. "Never," he replies, bending over the object of admiration, "never but in your eyes." "Oh, Mr. Caveton," cries the young lady, blushing of course. "Indeed I speak the truth," replies the throwing-off young gentleman, "I never saw any approach to them. I used to think my cousin's blue eyes lovely, but they grow dim and colourless beside yours." "Oh! a beautiful cousin, Mr. Caveton!" replies the young lady, with that perfect artlessness which is the distinguishing characteristic of all young ladies; "an affair, of course." "No; indeed, indeed you wrong me," rejoins the throwing-off young gentleman with great energy. "I fervently hope that her attachment towards me may be nothing but the natural result of our close intimacy in childhood, and that in change of scene and among new faces she may soon overcome it. I love her! Think not so meanly of me, Miss Lowfield, I beseech, as to suppose that title, lands, riches, and beauty, can influence *my* choice. The heart, the heart, Miss Lowfield." Here

the throwing-off young gentleman sinks his voice to a still lower whisper; and the young lady duly proclaims to all the other young ladies, when they go upstairs to put their bonnets on, that Mr. Caveton's relations are all immensely rich, and that he is hopelessly beloved by title, lands, riches, and beauty.

We have seen a throwing-off young gentleman who, to our certain knowledge, was innocent of a note of music, and scarcely able to recognise a tune by ear, volunteer a Spanish air upon the guitar when he had previously satisfied himself that there was not such an instrument within a mile of the house.

We have heard another throwing-off young gentleman, after striking a note or two upon the piano, and accompanying it correctly (by dint of laborious practice) with his voice, assure a circle of wondering listeners that so acute was his ear that he was wholly unable to sing out of tune, let him try as he would. We have lived to witness the unmasking of another throwing-off young gentleman, who went out a-visiting in a military cap with a gold band and tassel, and who, after passing successfully for a captain, and being lauded to the skies for his red whiskers, his bravery, his soldierly bearing and his pride, turned out to be the dishonest son of an honest linen-draper in a small country town, and whom, if it were not for this fortunate exposure, we should not yet despair of encountering as the fortunate husband of some rich heiress. Ladies, ladies, the throwing-off young gentlemen are often swindlers, and always fools. So pray you avoid them.

THE YOUNG LADIES' YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

THIS young gentleman has several titles. Some young ladies consider him "a nice young man," others "a fine young man," others "quite a lady's man," others "a handsome man," others "a remarkably good-looking young man." With some young ladies he is "a perfect angel," and with others "quite a love." He is likewise a charming creature, a duck, and a dear.

The young ladies' young gentleman has usually a fresh colour and very white teeth, which latter articles, of course, he displays on every possible opportunity. He has brown or black hair, and whiskers of the same, if possible; but a slight tinge of red, or the hue which is vulgarly known as *sandy*, is not considered an objection. If his head and face be large, his nose prominent, and his figure square, he is an uncommonly fine young man, and worshipped accordingly. Should his whiskers meet beneath his chin; so much the better, though this is not absolutely insisted on; but he must wear an under-waistcoat, and smile constantly.

There was a great party got up by some party-loving friends of ours last summer, to go and dine in Epping Forest. As we hold that such wild expeditions should never be indulged in, save by people of the smallest means, who have no dinner at home, we should indubitably have excused ourself from attending, if we had not recollected that the projectors of the excursion were always accompanied on such occasions by a choice sample of the young ladies'

young gentleman, whom we were very anxious to have an opportunity of meeting. This determined us, and we went.

We were to make for Chigwell in four glass coaches, each with a trifling company of six or eight inside, and a little boy belonging to the projectors on the box—and to start from the residence of the projectors, Woburn Place, Russell Square, at half-past ten precisely. We arrived at the place of rendezvous at the appointed time, and found the glass coaches and the little boys quite ready, and divers young ladies and young gentlemen looking anxiously over the breakfast-parlour blinds, who appeared by no means so much gratified by our approach as we might have expected, but evidently wished we had been somebody else. Observing that our arrival in lieu of the unknown occasioned some disappointment, we ventured to inquire who was yet to come, when we found, from the hasty reply of a dozen voices, that it was no other than the young ladies' young gentleman.

"I cannot imagine," said the mamma, "what has become of Mr. Balim—always so punctual, always so pleasant and agreeable. I am sure I can-*not* think." As these last words were uttered in that measured, emphatic manner which painfully announces that the speaker has not quite made up his or her mind what to say, but is determined to talk on nevertheless, the eldest daughter took up the subject, and hoped no accident had happened to Mr. Balim, upon which there was a general chorus of "Dear Mr. Balim!" and one young lady, more adventurous than the rest, proposed that an express should be straightway sent to dear Mr. Balim's

lodgings. This, however, the papa resolutely opposed, observing, in what a short young lady behind us termed "quite a bearish way," that if Mr. Balim didn't choose to come, he might stop at home. At this all the daughters raised a murmur of "Oh, pa!" except one sprightly little girl of eight or ten years old, who, taking advantage of a pause in the discourse, remarked that perhaps Mr. Balim might have been married that morning—for which impertinent suggestion she was summarily ejected from the room by her eldest sister.

We were all in a state of great mortification and uneasiness, when one of the little boys, running into the room as airily as little boys usually run who have an unlimited allowance of animal food in the holidays, and keep their hands constantly forced down to the bottoms of very deep trouser-pockets when they take exercise, joyfully announced that Mr. Balim was at that moment coming up the street in a hackney-cab; and the intelligence was confirmed beyond all doubt a minute afterwards by the entry of Mr. Balim himself, who was received with repeated cries of "Where have you been, you naughty creature?" whereunto the naughty creature replied that he had been in bed in consequence of a late party the night before, and had only just risen. The acknowledgment awakened a variety of agonising fears that he had taken no breakfast; which appearing after a slight cross-examination to be the real state of the case, breakfast for one was immediately ordered, notwithstanding Mr. Balim's repeated protestations that he couldn't think of it. He did think of it though, and thought better of it too, for he made a remarkably

good meal when it came, and was assiduously served by a select knot of young ladies. It was quite delightful to see how he ate and drank, while one pair of fair hands poured out his coffee, and another put in the sugar, and another the milk; the rest of the company ever and anon casting angry glances at their watches, and the glass coaches—and the little boys looking on in an agony of apprehension lest it should begin to rain before we set out; it might have rained all day, after we were once too far to turn back again, and welcome for aught they cared.

However, the cavalcade moved at length, every coachman being accommodated with a hamper between his legs something larger than a wheelbarrow; and the company being packed as closely as they possibly could in the carriages, "according," as one married lady observed, "to the immemorial custom, which was half the diversion of gipsy parties." Thinking it very likely it might be (we have never been able to discover the other half), we submitted to be stowed away with a cheerful aspect, and were fortunate enough to occupy one corner of a coach in which were one old lady, four young ladies, and the renowned Mr. Balim, the young ladies' young gentleman.

We were no sooner fairly off than the young ladies' young gentleman hummed a fragment of an air, which induced a young lady to inquire whether he had danced to that the night before. "By Heaven, then, I did," replied the young gentleman, "and with a lovely heiress—a superb creature, with twenty thousand pounds." "You seem rather struck," observed another young lady. "'Gad, she was a sweet

creature," returned the young gentleman, arranging his hair. "Of course *she* was struck too?" inquired the first young lady. "How can you ask, love?" interposed the second; "could she fail to be?" "Well, honestly, I think she was," observed the young gentleman. At this point of the dialogue, the young lady who had spoken first, and who sat on the young gentleman's right, struck him a severe blow on the arm with a rosebud, and said he was a vain man—whereupon the young gentleman insisted on having the rosebud, and the young lady appealing for help to the other young ladies, a charming struggle ensued, terminating in the victory of the young gentleman, and the capture of the rosebud. This little skirmish over, the married lady, who was the mother of the rosebud, smiled sweetly upon the young gentleman, and accused him of being a flirt; the young gentleman pleading not guilty, a most interesting discussion took place upon the important point whether the young gentleman was a flirt or not, which being an agreeable conversation of a light kind, lasted a considerable time. At length, a short silence occurring, the young ladies on either side of the young gentleman fell suddenly fast asleep; and the young gentleman, winking upon us to preserve silence, won a pair of gloves from each, thereby causing them to wake with equal suddenness and to scream very loud. The lively conversation to which this pleasantry gave rise, lasted for the remainder of the ride, and would have eked out a much longer one.

We dined rather more comfortably than people usually do under such circumstances, nothing having

been left behind but the corkscrew and the bread. The married gentlemen were unusually thirsty, which they attributed to the heat of the weather ; the little boys ate to inconvenience ; mammas were very jovial, and their daughters very fascinating ; and the attendants being well-behaved men, got exceedingly drunk at a respectful distance.

We had our eye on Mr. Balim at dinner-time, and perceived that he flourished wonderfully, being still surrounded by a little group of young ladies, who listened to him as an oracle, while he ate from their plates and drank from their glasses in a manner truly captivating from its excessive playfulness. His conversation, too, was exceedingly brilliant. In fact, one elderly lady assured us, that in the course of a little lively *badinage* on the subject of ladies' dresses, he had evinced as much knowledge as if he had been born and bred a milliner.

As such of the fat people who did not happen to fall asleep after dinner entered upon a most vigorous game at ball, we slipped away alone into a thicker part of the wood, hoping to fall in with Mr. Balim—the greater part of the young people having dropped off in twos and threes, and the young ladies' young gentleman among them. Nor were we disappointed, for we had not walked far, when, peeping through the trees, we discovered him before us, and truly it was a pleasant thing to contemplate his greatness.

The young ladies' young gentleman was seated upon the ground, at the feet of a few young ladies who were reclining on a bank ; he was so profusely decked with scarfs, ribands, flowers, and other pretty spoils, that he looked like a lamb—or perhaps a calf

would be a better simile—adorned for the sacrifice. One young lady supported a parasol over his interesting head, another held his hat, and a third his neck-cloth, which in romantic fashion he had thrown off; the young gentleman himself, with his hand upon his breast, and his face moulded into an expression of the most honeyed sweetness, was warbling forth some choice specimens of vocal music in praise of female loveliness, in a style so exquisitely perfect, that we burst into an involuntary shout of laughter, and made a hasty retreat.

What charming fellows these young ladies' young gentlemen are! Ducks, dears, loves, angels, are all terms inadequate to express their merit. They are such amazingly, uncommonly, wonderfully nice men.

CONCLUSION.

As we have placed before the young ladies so many specimens of young gentlemen, and have also in the dedication of this volume given them to understand how much we reverence and admire their numerous virtues and perfections; as we have given them such strong reasons to treat us with confidence, and to banish, in our case, all that reserve and distrust of the male sex which, as a point of general behaviour, they cannot do better than preserve and maintain—we say, as we have done all this, we feel that now, when we have arrived at the close of our task, they may naturally press upon us the inquiry, what particular description of young gentleman we can conscientiously recommend.

Here we are at a loss. We look over our list, and can neither recommend the bashful young gentleman, nor the out-and-out young gentleman, nor the very friendly young gentleman, nor the military young gentleman, nor the political young gentleman, nor the domestic young gentleman, nor the censorious young gentleman, nor the funny young gentleman, nor the theatrical young gentleman, nor the poetical young gentleman, nor the throwing-off young gentleman, nor the young ladies' young gentleman.

As there are some good points about many of them which still are not sufficiently numerous to render any one among them eligible, as a whole, our respectful advice to the young ladies is, to seek for a young gentleman who unites in himself the best qualities of all, and the worst weaknesses of none, and to lead him forthwith to the hymeneal altar, whether he will or no. And to the young lady who secures him, we beg to tender one short fragment of matrimonial advice, selected from many sound passages of a similar tendency, to be found in a letter written by Dean Swift to a young lady on her marriage.

“The grand affair of your life will be to gain and preserve the esteem of your husband. Neither good-nature nor virtue will suffer him to *esteem* you against his judgment; and although he is not capable of using you ill, yet you will in time grow a thing indifferent and perhaps contemptible; unless you can supply the loss of youth and beauty with more durable qualities. You have but a very few years to be young and handsome in the eyes of the world; and as few months to be so in the eyes of a husband who is not a fool; for I hope you do not still dream

of charms and raptures, which marriage ever did, and ever will, put a sudden end to."

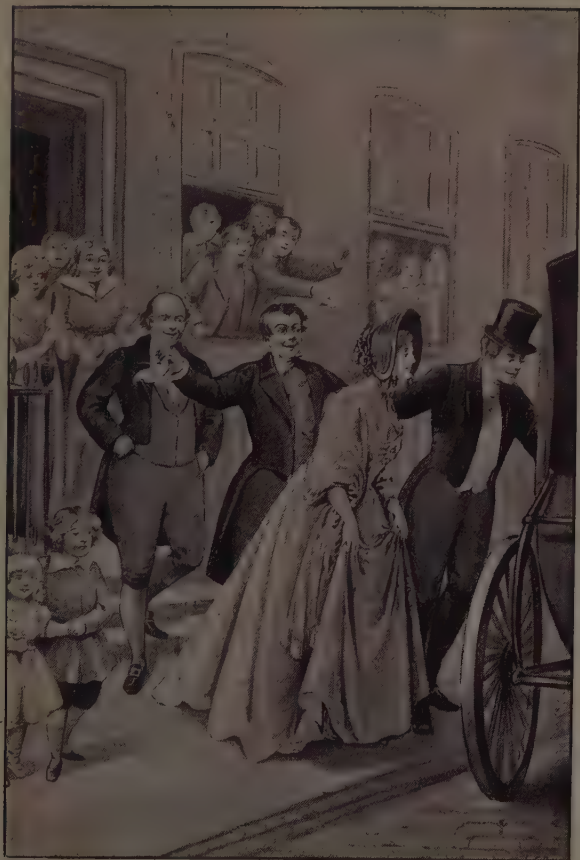
From the anxiety we express for the proper behaviour of the fortunate lady after marriage, it may possibly be inferred that the young gentleman to whom we have so delicately alluded, is no other than ourself. Without in any way committing ourself upon this point, we have merely to observe that we are ready to receive sealed offers containing a full specification of age, temper, appearance, and condition; but we beg it to be distinctly understood that we do not pledge ourself to accept the highest bidder.

These offers may be forwarded to the publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, London; * to whom all pieces of plate and other testimonials of approbation from the young ladies generally, are respectfully requested to be addressed.

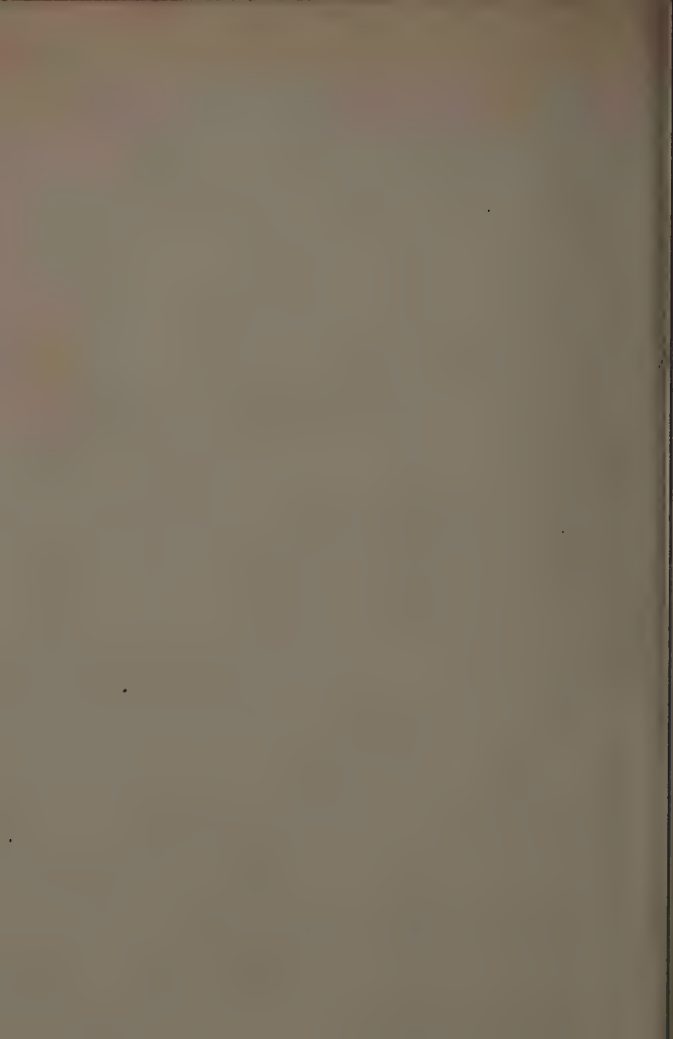
* The original publishers.

Sketches of Young Couples.





S.S. "The steps are crowded with servants." Page 290.



An Urgent Remonstrance, etc.

TO THE GENTLEMEN OF ENGLAND

(BEING BACHELORS OR WIDOWERS,)

THE REMONSTRANCE OF THEIR FAITHFUL FELLOW-
SUBJECT,

SHEWETH,—

THAT Her Most Gracious Majesty, Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith, did, on the 23rd day of November last past, declare and pronounce to Her Most Honourable Privy Council, Her Majesty's Most Gracious intention of entering into the bonds of wedlock.

THAT Her Most Gracious Majesty, in so making known Her Most Gracious intention to Her Most Honourable Privy Council as aforesaid, did use and employ the words—"It is my intention to ally myself in marriage with Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha."

THAT the present is Bissextile, or Leap Year, in which it is held and considered lawful for any lady to offer and submit proposals of marriage to any gentleman, and to enforce and insist upon acceptance of the same, under pain of a certain fine or penalty; to wit, one silk or satin dress of the first quality, to be chosen by the lady and paid (or owed) for by the gentleman.

THAT these and other the horrors and dangers with which the said Bissextile, or Leap Year, threatens

the gentlemen of England on every occasion of its periodical return, have been greatly aggravated and augmented by the terms of Her Majesty's said Most Gracious communication, which have filled the heads of divers young ladies in this Realm with certain new ideas destructive to the peace of mankind, that never entered their imagination before.

THAT a case has occurred in Camberwell, in which a young lady informed her Papa that "she intended to ally herself in marriage" with Mr. Smith of Stepney; and that another, and a very distressing case, has occurred at Tottenham, in which a young lady not only stated her intention of allying herself in marriage with her cousin John, but, taking violent possession of her said cousin, actually married him.

THAT similar outrages are of constant occurrence, not only in the capital and its neighbourhood, but throughout the kingdom, and that unless the excited female populace be speedily checked and restrained in their lawless proceedings, most deplorable results must ensue therefrom; among which may be anticipated a most alarming increase in the population of the country, with which no efforts of the agricultural or manufacturing interest can possibly keep pace.

THAT there is strong reason to suspect the existence of a most extensive plot, conspiracy, or design, secretly contrived by vast numbers of single ladies in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and now extending its ramifications in every quarter of the land; the object and intent of which plainly appears to be the holding and solemnising of an enormous and unprecedented number of marriages.

on the day on which the nuptials of Her said Most Gracious Majesty are performed.

THAT such plot, conspiracy, or design, strongly favours of Popery, as tending to the discomfiture of the Clergy of the Established Church, by entailing upon them great mental and physical exhaustion; and that such Popish plots are fomented and encouraged by Her Majesty's Ministers, which clearly appears—not only from Her Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs traitorously letting married while holding office under the Crown; but from Mr. O'Connell having been heard to declare and avow that, if he had a daughter to marry, she should be married on the same day as Her said Most Gracious Majesty.

THAT such arch plots, conspiracies, and designs, besides being fraught with danger to the Established Church, and (consequently) to the State, cannot fail to bring ruin and bankruptcy upon a large class of Her Majesty's subjects; as a great and sudden increase in the number of married men occasioning the comparative desertion (for a time) of Taverns, Hotels, Billiard-rooms, and Gaming-houses, will deprive the Proprietors of their accustomed profits and returns. And in further proof of the depth and baseness of such designs, it may be here observed, that all proprietors of Taverns, Hotels, Billiard-rooms, and Gaming-houses, are (especially the last) solemnly devoted to the Protestant religion.

FOR all these reasons, and many others of no less gravity and import, an urgent appeal is made to the gentlemen of England (being bachelors or widowers) to take immediate steps for convening

a Public meeting ; To consider of the best and surest means of averting the dangers with which they are threatened by the recurrence of Bissextile, or Leap Year, and the additional sensation created among single ladies by the terms of Her Majesty's Most Gracious Declaration ; To take measures, without delay, for resisting the said single Ladies, and counteracting their evil designs ; And to pray Her Majesty to dismiss her present Ministers, and to summon to her Councils those distinguished Gentlemen in various Honourable Professions who, by insulting on all occasions the only Lady in England who can be insulted with safety, have given a sufficient guarantee to Her Majesty's Loving Subjects that they, at least, are qualified to make war with women, and are already expert in the use of those weapons which are common to the lowest and most abandoned of the sex.

Sketches of Young Couples.

THE YOUNG COUPLE.

THERE is to be a wedding this morning at the corner house in the terrace. The pastry-cook's people have been there half a dozen times already; all day yesterday there was a great stir and bustle, and they were up this morning as soon as it was light. Miss Emma Fielding is going to be married to young Mr. Harvey.

Heaven alone can tell in what bright colours this marriage is painted upon the mind of the little housemaid at number six, who has hardly slept a wink all night with thinking of it, and now stands on the unswept doorsteps leaning upon her broom, and looking wistfully towards the enchanted house. Nothing short of omniscience can divine what visions of the baker, or the greengrocer, or the smart and most insinuating buttermilk man, are flitting across her mind—what thoughts of how she would dress on such an occasion, if she were a lady—of how she would dress, if she were only a bride—of how cook would dress, being bride's-maid, conjointly with her sister "in place" at Fulham, and how the clergyman, deeming them so many ladies, would be quite humbled and respectful. What day-dreams of hope and happiness—of life being one perpetual holiday, with no master and no mistress to grant or withhold it—of every Sunday being a Sunday out—of pure freedom as to curls and ringlets, and no obligation to hide fine heads of hair in caps—what pictures of happiness, vast and immense to her,

but utterly ridiculous to us, bewilder the brain of the little housemaid at number six, all called into existence by the wedding at the corner!

We smile at such things, and so we should, though perhaps for a better reason than commonly presents itself. It should be pleasant to us to know that there are notions of happiness so moderate and limited, since upon those who entertain them, happiness and lightness of heart are very easily bestowed.

But the little housemaid is awakened from her reverie, for forth from the door of the magical corner house there runs towards her, all fluttering in smart new dress and streaming ribands, her friend Jane Adams, who comes all out of breath to redeem a solemn promise of taking her in, under cover of the confusion, to see the breakfast table spread forth in state, and—sight of sights!—her young mistress ready dressed for church.

And there, in good truth, when they have stolen upstairs on tiptoe and edged themselves in at the chamber-door—there is Miss Emma “looking like the sweetest picter,” in a white chip bonnet and orange flower, and all other elegancies becoming a bride (with the make, shape, and quality of every article of which the girl is perfectly familiar in one moment, and never forgets to her dying day)—and there is Miss Emma’s mamma in tears, and Miss Emma’s papa comforting her, and saying how that of course she has been long looking forward to this, and how happy she ought to be—and there too is Miss Emma’s sister with her arms round her neck, and the other bride’s-maid all smiles and tears, quieting the children, who would cry more but that they are so finely

dressed, and yet sob for fear sister Emma should be taken away—and it is all so affecting, that the two servant-girls cry more than anybody; and Jane Adams, sitting down upon the stairs, when they have crept away, declares that her legs tremble so that she don't know what to do, and that she will say for Miss Emma, that she never had a hasty word from her, and that she does hope and pray she may be happy.

But Jane soon comes round again, and then surely there never was anything like the breakfast table, glittering with plate and china, and set out with flowers and sweets, and long-necked bottles, in the most sumptuous and dazzling manner. In the centre, too, is the mighty charm, the cake, glistening with frosted sugar, and garnished beautiful. They agree that there ought to be a little Cupid under one of the barley-sugar temples, or at least two hearts and an arrow; but, with this exception, there is nothing to wish for, and a table could not be handsomer. As they arrive at this conclusion, who should come in but Mr. John! to whom Jane says that it's only Anne from number six; and John says *he* knows, for he's often winked his eye down the area, which causes Anne to blush and look confused. She is going away, indeed; when Mr. John will have it that she must drink a glass of wine, and he says never mind it's being early in the morning, it won't hurt her: so they shut the door and pour out the wine; and Anne drinking Jane's health, and adding, "and here's wishing you yours, Mr. John," drinks it in a great many sips—Mr. John all the time making jokes appropriate to the occasion. At last Mr. John, who has

waxed bolder by degrees, pleads the usage at weddings, and claims the privilege of a kiss, which he obtains after a great scuffle ; and footsteps being now heard on the stairs, they disperse suddenly.

By this time a carriage has driven up to convey the bride to church, and Anne of number six prolonging the process of "cleaning her door," has the satisfaction of beholding the bride and bride's-maids, and the papa and mamma, hurry into the same and drive rapidly off. Nor is this all, for soon other carriages begin to arrive with a posse of company all beautifully dressed, at whom she could stand and gaze for ever ; but having something else to do, is compelled to take one last long look and shut the street door.

And now the company have gone down to breakfast, and tears have given place to smiles, for all the corks are out of the long-necked bottles, and their contents are disappearing rapidly. Miss Emma's papa is at the top of the table ; Miss Emma's mamma at the bottom ; and beside the latter are Miss Emma herself and her husband—admitted on all hands to be the handsomest and most interesting young couple ever known. All down both sides of the table, too, are various young ladies, beautiful to see, and various young gentlemen who seem to think so ; and there, in a post of honour, is an unmarried aunt of Miss Emma's, reported to possess unheard-of riches, and to have expressed vast testamentary intentions respecting her favourite niece and new nephew. This lady has been very liberal and generous already, as the jewels worn by the bride abundantly testify, but that is nothing to what she means to do, or even to what she has done, for she put herself in close

communication with the dressmaker three months ago, and prepared a wardrobe (with some articles worked by her own hands) fit for a princess. People may call her an old maid, and so she may be, but she is neither cross nor ugly for all that ; on the contrary, she is very cheerful and pleasant-looking, and very kind and tender-hearted ; which is no matter of surprise except to those who yield to popular prejudices without thinking why, and will never grow wiser and never know better.

Of all the company though, none are more pleasant to behold or better pleased with themselves than two young children, who, in honour of the day, have seats among the guests. Of these, one is a little fellow of six or eight years old, brother to the bride ; and the other a girl of the same age, or something younger, whom he calls " his wife." The real bride and bridegroom are not more devoted than they : he all love and attention, and she all blushes and fondness, toying with a little bouquet which he gave her this morning, and placing the scattered rose-leaves in her bosom with nature's own coquettishness. They have dreamt of each other in their quiet dreams, these children, and their little hearts have been nearly broken when the absent one has been dispraised in jest. When will there come in after-life a passion so earnest, generous, and true as theirs ; what, even in its gentlest realities, can have the grace and charm that hover round such fairy lovers !

By this time the merriment and happiness of the feast have gained their height ; certain ominous looks begin to be exchanged between the bride's-maids, and somehow it gets whispered about that the carriage

which is to take the young couple into the country has arrived. Such members of the party as are most disposed to prolong its enjoyments, affect to consider this a false alarm, but it turns out too true, being speedily confirmed, first by the retirement of the bride and a select file of intimates who are to prepare her for the journey, and secondly by the withdrawal of the ladies generally. To this there ensues a particularly awkward pause, in which everybody essays to be facetious, and nobody succeeds; at length the bridegroom makes a mysterious disappearance in obedience to some equally mysterious signal; and the table is deserted.

Now, for at least six weeks last past it has been solemnly devised and settled that the young couple should go away in secret; but they no sooner appear without the door than the drawing-room windows are blocked up with ladies waving their handkerchiefs and kissing their hands, and the dining-room panes with gentlemen's faces beaming farewell in every queer variety of its expression. The hall and steps are crowded with servants in white favours, mixed up with particular friends and relations who have darted out to say good-bye; and foremost in the group are the tiny lovers arm in arm, thinking, with fluttering hearts, what happiness it would be to dash away together in that gallant coach, and never part again.

The bride has barely time for one hurried glance at her old home, when the steps rattle, the door slams, the horses clatter on the pavement, and they have left it far away.

A knot of women-servants still remain clustered in the hall, whispering among themselves, and there, of

course, is Anne from number six, who has made another escape on some plea or other, and been an admiring witness of the departure. There are two points on which Anne expatiates over and over again, without the smallest appearance of fatigue or intending to leave off: one is, that she "never see in all her life such a—oh, such a angel of a gentleman as Mr. Harvey"—and the other, that she "can't tell how it is, but it don't seem a bit like a work-a-day, or a Sunday neither—it's all so unsettled and unregular."

THE FORMAL COUPLE.

THE formal couple are the most prim, cold, immovable, and unsatisfactory people on the face of the earth. Their faces, voices, dress, house, furniture, walk, and manner, are all the essence of formality, unrelieved by one redeeming touch of frankness, heartiness, or nature.

Everything with the formal couple resolves itself into a matter of form. They don't call upon you on your account, but their own; not to see how you are, but to show how they are: it is not a ceremony to do honour to you, but to themselves—not due to your position, but to theirs. If one of a friend's children die, the formal couple are as sure and punctual in sending to the house as the undertaker; if a friend's family be increased, the monthly nurse is not more attentive than they. The formal couple, in fact, joyfully seize all occasions of testifying their good-breeding and precise observance of the little usages of society; and for you, who are the means to this

end, they care as much as a man does for the tailor who has enabled him to cut a figure, or a woman for the milliner who has assisted her to a conquest.

Having an extensive connection among that kind of people who make acquaintances and eschew friends, the formal gentleman attends from time to time a great many funerals, to which he is formally invited, and to which he formally goes, as returning a call for the last time. Here his deportment is of the most faultless description; he knows the exact pitch of voice it is proper to assume, the sombre look he ought to wear, the melancholy tread which should be his gait for the day. He is perfectly acquainted with all the dreary courtesies to be observed in a mourning-coach; knows when to sigh, and when to hide his nose in the white handkerchief; and looks into the grave and shakes his head when the ceremony is concluded, with the sad formality of a mute.

"What kind of funeral was it?" says the formal lady, when he returns home. "Oh!" replies the formal gentleman, "there never was such a gross and disgusting impropriety; there were no feathers." "No feathers!" cries the lady, as if on wings of black feathers dead people fly to Heaven, and, lacking them, they must of necessity go elsewhere. Her husband shakes his head; and further adds, that they had seed-cake instead of plum-cake, and that it was all white wine. "All white wine!" exclaims his wife. "Nothing but sherry and madeira," says the husband. "What! no port?" "Not a drop." No port, no plums, and no feathers! "You will recollect, my dear," says the formal lady, in a voice of stately reproof, "that when we first met this poor man who

is now dead and gone, and he took that very strange course of addressing me at dinner without being previously introduced, I ventured to express my opinion that the family were quite ignorant of etiquette, and very imperfectly acquainted with the decencies of life. You have now had a good opportunity of judging for yourself, and all I have to say is, that I trust you will never go to a funeral *there* again." "My dear," replies the formal gentleman, "I never will." So the informal deceased is cut in his grave; and the formal couple, when they tell the story of the funeral, shake their heads, and wonder what some people's feelings *are* made of, and what their notions of propriety *can* be!

If the formal couple have a family (which they sometimes have), they are not children, but little, pale, sour, sharp-nosed men and women; and so exquisitely brought up, that they might be very old dwarfs for anything that appeareth to the contrary. Indeed, they are so acquainted with forms and conventionalities, and conduct themselves with such strict decorum, that to see the little girl break a looking-glass in some wild outbreak, or the little boy kick his parents, would be to any visitor an unspeakable relief and consolation.

The formal couple are always sticklers for what is rigidly proper, and have a great readiness in detecting hidden impropriety of speech or thought, which by less scrupulous people would be wholly unsuspected. Thus, if they pay a visit to the theatre, they sit all night in a perfect agony lest anything improper or immoral should proceed from the stage; and if anything should happen to be said which admits

of a double construction, they never fail to take it up directly, and to express by their looks the great outrage which their feelings have sustained. Perhaps this is their chief reason for absenting themselves almost entirely from places of public amusement. They go sometimes to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy ; but that is often more shocking than the stage itself, and the formal lady thinks that it really is high time Mr. Etty was prosecuted and made a public example of.

We made one at a christening party not long since, where there were amongst the guests a formal couple, who suffered the acutest torture from certain jokes, incidental to such an occasion, cut—and very likely dried also—by one of the godfathers ; a red-faced elderly gentleman, who, being highly popular with the rest of the company, had it all his own way, and was in great spirits. It was at supper-time that this gentleman came out in full force. We—being of a grave and quiet demeanour—had been chosen to escort the formal lady downstairs, and, sitting beside her, had a favourable opportunity of observing her emotions.

We have a shrewd suspicion that, in the very beginning, and in the first blush—literally the first blush—of the matter, the formal lady had not felt quite certain whether the being present at such a ceremony, and encouraging, as it were, the public exhibition of a baby, was not an act involving some degree of indelicacy and impropriety ; but certain we are, that when that baby's health was drunk, and allusions were made, by a gray-headed gentleman proposing it, to the time when he had dandled in his

arms the young Christian's mother, certain we are that then the formal lady took the alarm, and recoiled from the old gentleman as from a hoary profligate. Still she bore it ; she fanned herself with an indignant air, but still she bore it. A comic song was sung, involving a confession from some imaginary gentleman that he had kissed a female, and yet the formal lady bore it. But when at last, the health of the godfather before-mentioned being drunk, the godfather rose to return thanks, and in the course of his observations darkly hinted at babies yet unborn, and even contemplated the possibility of the subject of that festival having brothers and sisters, the formal lady could endure no more, but, bowing slightly round, and sweeping haughtily past the offender, left the room in tears, under the protection of the formal gentleman.

THE LOVING COUPLE.

THERE cannot be a better practical illustration of the wise saw and ancient instance, that there may be too much of a good thing, that is represented by a loving couple. Undoubtedly it is meet and proper that two persons joined together in holy matrimony should be loving, and unquestionably it is pleasant to know and see that they are so ; but there is a time for all things, and the couple who happen to be always in a loving state before company are well-nigh intolerable.

And in taking up this position we would have it distinctly understood that we do not seek alone the

sympathy of bachelors, in whose objection to loving couples we recognise interested motives and personal considerations. We grant that to that unfortunate class of society there may be something very irritating, tantalising, and provoking, in being compelled to witness those gentle endearments and chaste interchanges which to loving couples are quite the ordinary business of life. But while we recognise the natural character of the prejudice to which these unhappy men are subject, we can neither receive their biassed evidence, nor address ourself to their inflamed and angered minds. Dispassionate experience is our only guide; and in these moral essays we seek no less to reform hymeneal offenders than to hold out a timely warning to all rising couples, and even to those who have not yet set forth upon their pilgrimage towards the matrimonial altar.

Let all couples, present and to come, therefore profit by the example of Mr. and Mrs. Leaver, themselves a loving couple in the first degree.

Mr. and Mrs. Leaver are pronounced by Mrs. Starling, a widow lady who lost her husband when she was young, and lost herself about the same time—for by her own count she has never since grown five years older—to be a perfect model of wedded felicity. “You would suppose,” says the romantic lady, “that they were lovers only just now engaged. Never was such happiness! They are so tender, so affectionate, so attached to each other, so enamoured, that positively nothing can be more charming!”

“Augusta, my soul,” says Mr. Leaver. “Augustus, my life,” replies Mrs. Leaver. “Sing some little ballad, darling,” quoth Mr. Leaver. “I couldn’t,

indeed, dearest," returns Mrs. Leaver. "Do, my dove," says Mr. Leaver. "I couldn't possibly, my love," replies Mrs. Leaver; "and it's very naughty of you to ask me." "Naughty, darling!" cries Mr. Leaver. "Yes, very naughty, and very cruel," returns Mrs. Leaver, "for you know I have a sore throat, and that to sing would give me great pain. You're a monster, and I hate you. Go away!" Mrs. Leaver has said "go away," because Mr. Leaver has tapped her under the chin: Mr. Leaver not doing as he is bid, but on the contrary, sitting down beside her, Mrs. Leaver slaps Mr. Leaver; and Mr. Leaver in return slaps Mrs. Leaver, and it being now time for all persons present to look the other way, they look the other way, and hear a still small sound as of kissing, at which Mrs. Starling is thoroughly enraptured, and whispers her neighbour that if all married couples were like that, what a heaven this earth would be!

The loving couple are at home when this occurs, and maybe only three or four friends are present, but, unaccustomed to reserve upon this interesting point, they are pretty much the same abroad. Indeed, upon some occasions, such as a picnic or a water-party, their lovingness is even more developed, as we had an opportunity last summer of observing in person.

There was a great water-party made up to go to Twickenham and dine, and afterwards dance in an empty villa by the river-side, hired expressly for the purpose. Mr. and Mrs. Leaver were of the company; and it was our fortune to have a seat in the same boat, which was an eight-oared galley, manned by amateurs, with a blue striped awning of the same

pattern as their Guernsey shirts, and a dingy red flag of the same shade as the whiskers of the stroke oar. A coxswain being appointed, and all other matters adjusted, the eight gentlemen threw themselves into strong paroxysms, and pulled up with the tide, stimulated by the compassionate remarks of the ladies, who one and all exclaimed, that it seemed an immense exertion—as indeed it did. At first we raced the other boat, which came alongside in gallant style; but this being found an unpleasant amusement, as giving rise to a great quantity of splashing, and rendering the cold pies and other viands very moist, it was unanimously voted down, and we were suffered to shoot ahead, while the second boat followed ingloriously in our wake.

It was at this time that we first recognised Mr. Leaver. There were two firemen-watermen in the boat, lying by until somebody was exhausted; and one of them, who had taken upon himself the direction of affairs, was heard to cry in a gruff voice, “Pull away, number two—give it her, number two—take a longer reach, number two—now, number two, sir, think you’re winning a boat.” The greater part of the company had no doubt began to wonder which of the striped Guernseys it might be that stood in need of such encouragement, when a stifled shriek from Mrs. Leaver confirmed the doubtful and informed the ignorant; and Mr. Leaver, still further disguised in a straw hat and no neckcloth, was observed to be in a fearful perspiration, and failing visibly. Nor was the general consternation diminished at this instant by the same gentleman (in the performance of an accidental aquatic feat, termed “catching a

crab") plunging suddenly backward, and displaying nothing of himself to the company, but two violently struggling legs. Mrs. Leaver shrieked again several times, and cried piteously, "Is he dead? Tell me the worst. Is he dead?"

Now, a moment's reflection might have convinced the loving wife, that unless her husband were endowed with some most surprising powers of muscular action, he never could be dead while he kicked so hard; but still Mrs. Leaver cried, "Is he dead? is he dead?" and still everybody else cried—"No, no, no," until such time as Mr. Leaver was replaced in a sitting posture, and his oar (which had been going through all kinds of wrong-headed performances on its own account) was once more put in his hand, by the exertions of the two firemen-watermen. Mrs. Leaver then exclaimed, "Augustus, my child, come to me;" and Mr. Leaver said, "Augusta, my love, compose yourself, I am not injured." But Mrs. Leaver cried again more piteously than before, "Augustus, my child, come to me;" and now the company generally, who seemed to be apprehensive that if Mr. Leaver remained where he was, he might contribute more than his proper share towards the drowning of the party, disinterestedly took part with Mrs. Leaver, and said he really ought to go, and that he was not strong enough for such violent exercise, and ought never to have undertaken it. Reluctantly, Mr. Leaver went, and laid himself down at Mrs. Leaver's feet, and Mrs. Leaver stooping over him, said, "Oh, Augustus, how could you terrify me so?" and Mr. Leaver said, "Augusta, my sweet, I never meant to terrify you:" and Mrs. Leaver said, "You are

faint, my dear ;” and Mr. Leaver said, “I am rather so, my love ;” and they were very loving indeed under Mrs. Leaver’s veil, until at length Mr. Leaver came forth again, and pleasantly asked if he had not heard something said about bottled stout and sandwiches.

Mrs. Starling, who was one of the party, was perfectly delighted with this scene, and frequently murmured half-aside, “What a loving couple you are !” or “How delightful it is to see man and wife so happy together !” To us she was quite poetical (for we are a kind of cousins), observing that hearts beating in unison like that made life a paradise of sweets ; and that when kindred creatures were drawn together by sympathies so fine and delicate, what more than mortal happiness did not our souls partake ! To all this we answered “Certainly,” or “Very true,” or merely sighed, as the case might be. At every new act of the loving couple, the widow’s admiration broke out afresh ; and when Mrs. Leaver would not permit Mr. Leaver to keep his hat off, lest the sun should strike to his head, and give him a brain fever, Mrs. Starling actually shed tears, and said it reminded her of Adam and Eve.

The loving couple were thus loving all the way to Twickenham, but when we arrived there (by which time the amateur crew looked very thirsty and vicious) they were more playful than ever, for Mrs. Leaver threw stones at Mr. Leaver, and Mr. Leaver ran after Mrs. Leaver on the grass, in a most innocent and enchanting manner. At dinner, too, Mr. Leaver *would* steal Mrs. Leaver’s tongue, and Mrs. Leaver *would* retaliate upon Mr. Leaver’s fowl ; and when

Mrs. Leaver was going to take some lobster salad, Mr. Leaver wouldn't let her have any, saying that it made her ill, and she was always sorry for it afterwards, which afforded Mrs. Leaver an opportunity of pretending to be cross, and showing many other prettinesses. But this was merely the smiling surface of their loves, not the mighty depths of the stream, down to which the company, to say the truth, dived rather unexpectedly, from the following accident. It chanced that Mr. Leaver took upon himself to propose the bachelors who had first originated the notion of that entertainment, in doing which, he affected to regret that he was no longer of their body himself, and pretended grievously to lament his fallen state. This Mrs. Leaver's feelings could not brook, even in jest, and consequently, exclaiming aloud, "He loves me not, he loves me not!" she fell in a very pitiable state into the arms of Mrs. Starling, and, directly becoming insensible, was conveyed by that lady and her husband into another room. Presently Mr. Leaver came running back to know if there was a medical gentleman in company, and as there was (in what company is there not?) both Mr. Leaver and the medical gentleman hurried away together.

The medical gentleman was the first who returned, and among his intimate friends he was observed to laugh and wink, and look as unmedical as might be; but when Mr. Leaver came back he was very solemn, and in answer to all inquiries, shook his head, and remarked that Augusta was far too sensitive to be trifled with—an opinion which the widow subsequently confirmed. Finding that she was in no

imminent peril, however, the rest of the party betook themselves to dancing on the green, and very merry and happy they were, and a vast quantity of flirtation there was; the last circumstance being no doubt attributable, partly to the fineness of the weather, and partly to the locality, which is well known to be favourable to all harmless recreations.

In the bustle of the scene, Mr. and Mrs. Leaver stole down to the boat, and disposed themselves under the awning, Mrs. Leaver reclining her head upon Mr. Leaver's shoulder, and Mr. Leaver grasping her hand with great fervour, and looking in her face from time to time with a melancholy and sympathetic aspect. The widow sat apart, feigning to be occupied with a book, but stealthily observing them from behind her fan; and the two firemen-watermen, smoking their pipes on the bank hard by, nudged each other, and grinned in enjoyment of the joke. Very few of the party missed the loving couple; and the few who did, heartily congratulated each other on their disappearance.

THE CONTRADICTORY COUPLE.

ONE would suppose that two people who are to pass their whole lives together, and must necessarily be very often alone with each other, could find little pleasure in mutual contradiction; and yet what is more common than a contradictory couple?

The contradictory couple agree in nothing but contradiction. They return home from Mrs. Blue-bottle's dinner-party, each in an opposite corner of

the coach, and do not exchange a syllable until they have been seated for at least twenty minutes by the fireside at home, when the gentleman, raising his eyes from the stove, all at once breaks the silence—

“What a very extraordinary thing it is,” says he, “that you *will* contradict, Charlotte!” “*I* contradict!” cries the lady, “but that’s just like you.” “What’s like me?” says the gentleman sharply. “Saying that I contradict you,” replies the lady. “Do you mean to say that you do *not* contradict me?” retorts the gentleman; “do you mean to say that you have not been contradicting me the whole of this day? Do you mean to tell me now, that you have not?” “I mean to tell you nothing of the kind,” replies the lady quietly; “when you are wrong, of course I shall contradict you.”

During this dialogue the gentleman has been taking his brandy-and-water on one side of the fire, and the lady, with her dressing-case on the table, has been curling her hair on the other. She now lets down her back hair, and proceeds to brush it; preserving at the same time an air of conscious rectitude and suffering virtue, which is intended to exasperate the gentleman—and does so.

“I do believe,” he says, taking the spoon out of his glass, and tossing it on the table, “that of all the obstinate, positive, wrong-headed creatures that were ever born, you are the most so, Charlotte.” “Certainly, certainly, have it your own way, pray. You see how much *I* contradict you,” rejoins the lady. “Of course, you didn’t contradict me at dinner-time—oh, no, not you!” says the gentleman. “Yes,

I did," says the lady. "Oh, you did," cries the gentleman; "you admit that?" "If you call that contradiction, I do," the lady answers; "and I say again. Edward, that when I know you are wrong, I will contradict you. I am not your slave." "Not my slave!" repeats the gentleman bitterly; "and you still mean to say that in the Blackburns's new house there are not more than fourteen doors, including the door of the wine-cellar!" "I mean to say," retorts the lady, beating time with her hair-brush on the palm of her hand, "that in that house there are fourteen doors and no more." "Well then——" cries the gentleman, rising in despair, and pacing the room with rapid strides. "By G—, this is enough to destroy a man's intellect, and drive him mad!"

By and by the gentleman comes to a little, and passing his hand gloomily across his forehead, reseats himself in his former chair. There is a long silence, and this time the lady begins. "I appealed to Mr. Jenkins, who sat next to me on the sofa in the drawing-room during tea——" "Morgan, you mean," interrupts the gentleman. "I do not mean anything of the kind," answers the lady. "Now, by all that is aggravating and impossible to bear," cries the gentleman, clenching his hands and looking upwards in agony, "she is going to insist upon it that Morgan is Jenkins!" "Do you take me for a perfect fool?" exclaims the lady: "do you suppose I don't know the one from the other? Do you suppose I don't know that the man in the blue coat was Mr. Jenkins?" "Jenkins in a blue coat!" cries the gentleman with a groan; "Jenkins in a blue coat!"

a man who would suffer death rather than wear anything but brown!" "Do you dare to charge me with telling an untruth?" demands the lady, bursting into tears. "I charge you, ma'am," retorts the gentleman, starting up, "with being a monster of contradiction, a monster of aggravation, a—~~a—~~ Jenkins in a blue coat!—what have I done that I should be doomed to hear such statements!"

Expressing himself with great scorn and anguish, the gentleman takes up his candle and stalks off to bed, where, feigning to be fast asleep when the lady comes upstairs drowned in tears, murmuring lamentations over her hard fate, and indistinct intentions of consulting her brothers, he undergoes the secret torture of hearing her exclaim between whiles, "I know there are only fourteen doors in the house, I know it was Mr. Jenkins, I know he had a blue coat on, and I would say it as positively as I do now, if they were the last words I had to speak!"

If the contradictory couple are blessed with children, they are not the less contradictory on that account. Master James and Miss Charlotte present themselves after dinner, and being in perfect good-humour, and finding their parents in the same amiable state, augur from these appearances half a glass of wine a-piece and other extraordinary indulgences. But, unfortunately Master James, growing talkative upon such prospects, asks his mamma how tall Mrs. Parsons is, and whether she is not six feet high; to which his mamma replies, "Yes, she should think she was, for Mrs. Parsons is a very tall lady indeed; quite a giantess." "For Heaven's sake, Charlotte," cries her husband, "do not tell the child such preposterous

nonsense. Six feet high!" "Well," replies the lady, "surely I may be permitted to have an opinion; my opinion is, that she is six feet high—at least six feet." "Now you know, Charlotte," retorts the gentleman sternly, "that that is *not* your opinion—that you have no such idea—and that you only say this for the sake of contradiction." "You are exceedingly polite," his wife replies; "to be wrong about such a paltry question as anybody's height, would be no great crime; but I say again, that I believe Mrs. Parsons to be six feet—more than six feet; nay, I believe you know her to be full six feet, and only say she is not, because I say she is." This taunt disposes the gentleman to become violent, but he checks himself, and is content to mutter, in a haughty tone, "Six feet—ha! ha! Mrs. Parsons six feet!" and the lady answers, "Yes, six feet. I am sure I am glad you are amused, and I'll say it again—six feet." Thus the subject gradually drops off, and the contradiction begins to be forgotten, when Master James, with some undefined notion of making himself agreeable, and putting things to rights again, unfortunately asks his mamma what the moon's made of; which gives her occasion to say that he had better not ask her, for she is always wrong and never can be right; that he only exposes her to contradiction by asking any question of her; and that he had better ask his papa, who is infallible, and never can be wrong. Papa, smarting under this attack, gives a terrible pull at the bell, and says, that if the conversation is to proceed in this way, the children had better be removed. Removed they are, after a few tears and many struggles; and pa having looked at ma

sideways for a minute or two, with a baleful eye, draws his pocket-handkerchief over his face, and composes himself for his after-dinner nap.

The friends of the contradictory couple often deplore their frequent disputes, though they rather make light of them at the same time; observing, that there is no doubt they are very much attached to each other, and that they never quarrel except about trifles. But neither the friends of the contradictory couple, nor the contradictory couple themselves, reflect, that as the most stupendous objects in nature are but vast collections of minute particles, so the slightest and least considered trifles make up the sum of human happiness or misery.

THE COUPLE WHO DOTE UPON THEIR CHILDREN.

THE couple who dote upon their children have usually a great many of them—six or eight at least. The children are either the healthiest in the world, or the most unfortunate in existence. In either case, they are equally the theme of their doting parents, and equally a source of mental anguish and irritation to their doting parents' friends.

The couple who dote upon their children recognise no dates but those connected with their births, accidents, illnesses, or remarkable deeds. They keep a mental almanac with a vast number of Innocents' days, all in red letters. They recollect the last coronation, because on that day little Tom fell down the kitchen stair; the anniversary of the Gunpowder

Plot, because it was on the fifth of November that Ned asked whether wooden legs were made in heaven and cocked hats grew in gardens. Mrs. Whiffler will never cease to recollect the last day of the old year as long as she lives, for it was on that day that the baby had the four red spots on its nose which they took for measles; nor Christmas Day, for twenty-one days after Christmas Day the twins were born; nor Good Friday, for it was on a Good Friday that she was frightened by the donkey-cart when she was in the family way with Georgiana. The movable feasts have no motion for Mr. and Mrs. Whiffler, but remain pinned down tight and fast to the shoulders of some small child, from whom they can never be separated any more. Time was made, according to their creed, not for slaves but for girls and boys; the restless sands in his glass are but little children at play.

As we have already intimated, the children of this couple can know no medium. They are either prodigies of good health or prodigies of bad health; whatever they are, they must be prodigies. Mr. Whiffler must have to describe at his office such excruciating agonies constantly undergone by his eldest boy, as nobody else's eldest boy ever underwent; or he must be able to declare that there never was a child endowed with such amazing health, such an indomitable constitution, and such a cast-iron frame, as his child. His children must be, in some respect or other, above and beyond the children of all other people. To such an extent is this feeling pushed, that we were once slightly acquainted with a lady and gentleman who carried their heads so high and became so proud after their

youngest child fell out of a two-pair-of-stairs window without hurting himself much, that the greater part of their friends were obliged to forego their acquaintance. But perhaps this may be an extreme case, and one not justly entitled to be considered as a precedent of general application.

If a friend happen to dine in a friendly way with one of these couples who dote upon their children, it is nearly impossible for him to divert the conversation from their favourite topic. Everything reminds Mr. Whiffler of Ned, or Mrs. Whiffler of Mary Anne, or of the time before Ned was born, or the time before Mary Anne was thought of. The slightest remark, however harmless in itself, will awaken slumbering recollections of the twins. It is impossible to steer clear of them. They will come uppermost, let the poor man do what he may. Ned has been known to be lost sight of for half an hour, Dick has been forgotten, the name of Mary Anne has not been mentioned, but the twins will out. Nothing can keep down the twins.

"It's a very extraordinary thing, Saunders," says Mr. Whiffler to the visitor, "but—you have seen our little babies, the—the—twins?" The friend's heart sinks within him as he answers, "Oh, yes—often." "Your talking of the Pyramids," says Mr. Whiffler, quite as a matter of course, "reminds me of the twins. It's a very extraordinary thing about those babies—what colour should you say their eyes were?" "Upon my word," the friend stammers, "I hardly know how to answer"—the fact being, that except as the friend does not remember to have heard of any departure from the ordinary course of nature in the

instance of these twins, they might have no eyes at all for aught he has observed to the contrary. "You wouldn't say they were red, I suppose?" says Mr. Whiffler. The friend hesitates, and rather thinks they are; but inferring from the expression of Mr. Whiffler's face that red is not the colour, smiles with some confidence, and says, "No, no! very different from that." "What should you say to blue?" says Mr. Whiffler. The friend glances at him, and observing a different expression in his face, ventures to say, "I should say they were blue—a decided blue." "To be sure!" cries Mr. Whiffler triumphantly, "I knew you would! But what should you say if I was to tell you that the boy's eyes are blue and the girl's hazel, eh?" "Impossible!" exclaims the friend, not at all knowing why it should be impossible. "A fact, notwithstanding," cries Mr. Whiffler; "and let me tell you, Saunders, *that's* not a common thing in twins, or a circumstance that'll happen every day."

In this dialogue Mrs. Whiffler, as being deeply responsible for the twins, their charms and singularities, has taken no share; but she now relates, in broken English, a witticism of little Dick's bearing upon the subject just discussed, which delights Mr. Whiffler beyond measure, and causes him to declare that he would have sworn that was Dick's if he had heard it anywhere. Then he requests that Mrs. Whiffler will tell Saunders what Tom said about mad bulls; and Mrs. Whiffler relating the anecdote, a discussion ensues upon the different character of Tom's wit and Dick's wit; from which it appears that Dick's humour is of a lively turn, while Tom's style is the dry and caustic. This discussion being enlivened

by various illustrations, lasts a long time, and is only stopped by Mrs. Whiffler instructing the footman to ring the nursery bell, as the children were promised that they should come down and taste the pudding.

The friend turns pale when this order is given, and paler still when it is followed up by a great pattering on the staircase, (not unlike the sound of rain upon a skylight), a violent bursting open of the dining-room door and the tumultuous appearance of six small children, closely succeeded by a strong nursery-maid with a twin in each arm. As the whole eight are screaming, shouting, or kicking--some influenced by a ravenous appetite, some by a horror of the stranger, and some by a conflict of the two feelings--a pretty long space elapses before all their heads can be ranged round the table and anything like order restored; in bringing about which happy state of things both the nurse and footman are severely scratched. At length Mrs. Whiffler is heard to say, "Mr. Saunders, shall I give you some pudding?" A breathless silence ensues, and sixteen small eyes are fixed upon the guest in expectation of his reply. A wild shout of joy proclaims that he has said, "No, thank you." Spoons are waved in the air, legs appear above the table-cloth in uncontrollable ecstasy, and eighty short fingers dabble in damson syrup.

While the pudding is being deposed of, Mr. and Mrs. Whiffler look on with beaming countenances, and Mr. Whiffler nudging his friend Saunders, begs him to take notice of Tom's eyes, or Dick's chin, or Ned's nose, or Mary Anne's hair, or Emily's figure, or little Bob's calves, or Fanny's mouth, or Carry's head, as the case may be. Whatever the attention

of Mr. Saunders is called to, Mr. Saunders admires of course; though he is rather confused about the sex of the youngest branches and looks at the wrong children, turning to a girl when Mr. Whiffler directs his attention to a boy, and falling into raptures with a boy when he ought to be enchanted with a girl. Then the dessert comes, and there is a vast deal of scrambling after fruit, and sudden spirting forth of juice out of tight oranges into infant eyes, and much screeching and wailing in consequence. At length it becomes time for Mrs. Whiffler to retire, and all the children are by force of arms compelled to kiss and love Mr. Saunders before going upstairs, except Tom, who, lying on his back in the hall, proclaims that Mr. Saunders "is a naughty beast;" and Dick, who having drunk his father's wine when he was looking another way, is found to be intoxicated and is carried out, very limp and helpiess.

Mr. Whiffler and his friend are left alone together, but Mr. Whiffler's thoughts are still with his family, if his family are not with him. "Saunders," says he, after a short silence, "if you please, we'll drink Mrs. Whiffler and the children." Mr. Saunders feels this to be a reproach against himself for not proposing the same sentiment, and drinks it in some confusion. "Ah!" Mr. Whiffler sighs, "these children, Saunders, make one quite an old man." Mr. Saunders thinks that if they were his, they would make him a very old man; but he says nothing. "And yet," pursues Mr. Whiffler, "what can equal domestic happiness? what can equal the engaging ways of children! Saunders, why don't *you* get married?" Now, this is an embarrassing question,

because Mr. Saunders has been thinking that if he had at any time entertained matrimonial designs, the revelation of that day would surely have routed them for ever. "I am glad, however," says Mr. Whiffler, "that you *are* a bachelor—glad on one account, Saunders; a selfish one, I admit. Will you do Mrs. Whiffler and myself a favour?" Mr. Saunders is surprised—evidently surprised; but he replies, "with the greatest pleasure." "Then, will you, Saunders," says Mr. Whiffler, in an impressive manner, "will you cement and consolidate our friendship by coming into the family (so to speak) as a godfather?" "I shall be proud and delighted," replies Mr. Saunders; "which of the children is it? really, I thought they were all christened; or——" "Saunders," Mr. Whiffler interposes, "they *are* all christened; you are right. The fact is, that Mrs. Whiffler is—in short, we expect another." "Not a ninth!" cries the friend, all aghast at the idea. "Yes, Saunders," rejoins Mr. Whiffler solemnly, "a ninth. Did we drink Mrs. Whiffler's health? Let us drink it again, Saunders, and wish her well over it!"

Doctor Johnson used to tell a story of a man who had but one idea, which was a wrong one. The couple who dote upon their children are in the same predicament: at home or abroad, at all times, and in all places, their thoughts are bound up in this one subject, and have no sphere beyond. They relate the clever things their offspring say or do, and weary every company with their prolixity and absurdity. Mr. Whiffler takes a friend by the button at a street corner on a windy day to tell him a *bon*

mot of his youngest boy's ; and Mrs. Whiffler, calling to see a sick acquaintance, entertains her with a cheerful account of all her own past sufferings and present expectations. In such cases the sins of the fathers indeed descend upon the children ; for people soon come to regard them as predestined little bores. The couple who dote upon their children cannot be said to be actuated by a general love for these engaging little people (which would be a great excuse) ; for they are apt to underrate and entertain a jealousy of any children but their own. If they examined their own hearts, they would, perhaps, find at the bottom of all this, more self-love and egotism than they think of. Self-love and egotism are bad qualities, of which the unrestrained exhibition, though it may be sometimes amusing, never fails to be wearisome and unpleasant. Couples who dote upon their children, therefore, are best avoided.

THE COOL COUPLE.

THERE is an old-fashioned weather-glass representing a house with two doorways, in one of which is the figure of a gentleman, in the other the figure of a lady. When the weather is to be fine the lady comes out and the gentleman goes in ; when wet, the gentleman comes out and the lady goes in. They never seek each other's society, are never elevated and depressed by the same cause, and have nothing in common. They are the model of a cool couple, except that there is something of politeness and consideration about the behaviour of the gentleman in the weather

glass, in which neither of the cool couple can be said to participate.

The cool couple are seldom alone together, and when they are, nothing can exceed their apathy and dulness; the gentleman being for the most part drowsy, and the lady silent. If they enter into conversation, it is usually of an ironical or recriminatory nature. Thus, when the gentleman has indulged in a very long yawn and settled himself more snugly in his easy-chair, the lady will perhaps remark, "Well, I am sure, Charles! I hope you're comfortable." To which the gentleman replies, "Oh, yes, he's quite comfortable—quite." "There are not many married men, I hope," returns the lady, "who seek comfort in such selfish gratifications as you do." "Nor many wives who seek comfort in such selfish gratifications as *you* do, I hope," retorts the gentleman. "Whose fault is that?" demands the lady. The gentleman becoming more sleepy, returns no answer. "Whose fault is that?" the lady repeats. The gentleman still returning no answer, she goes on to say that she believes there never was, in all this world, anybody so attached to her home, so thoroughly domestic, so unwilling to seek a moment's gratification or pleasure beyond her own fireside as she. God knows that before she was married she never thought or dreamt of such a thing; and she remembers that her poor papa used to say again and again, almost every day of his life, "Oh, my dear Louisa, if you only marry a man who understands you, and takes the trouble to consider your happiness and accommodate himself a very little to your disposition, what a treasure he will find in you!" She supposes her papa knew what

her disposition was—he had known her long enough—he ought to have been acquainted with it, but what can she do? If her home is always dull and lonely, and her husband is always absent and finds no pleasure in her society, she is naturally sometimes driven (seldom enough, she is sure) to seek a little recreation elsewhere; she is not expected to pine and mope to death, she hopes. “Then come, Louisa,” says the gentleman, waking up as suddenly as he fell asleep, “stop at home this evening, and so will I.” “I should be sorry to suppose, Charles, that you took a pleasure in aggravating me,” replies the lady; “but you know as well as I do that I am particularly engaged to Mrs. Mortimer, and that it would be an act of the grossest rudeness and ill-breeding, after accepting a seat in her box and preventing her from inviting anybody else, not to go.” “Ah! there it is!” says the gentleman, shrugging his shoulders, “I knew that perfectly well. I knew you couldn’t devote an evening to your own home. Now all I have to say, Louisa, is this—recollect that *I* was quite willing to stay at home, and that it’s no fault of *mine* we are not oftener together.”

With that the gentleman goes away to keep an old appointment at his club, and the lady hurries off to dress for Mrs. Mortimer’s; and neither thinks of the other until by some odd chance they find themselves alone again.

But it must not be supposed that the cool couple are habitually a quarrelsome one. Quite the contrary. These differences are only occasions for a little self-excuse—nothing more. In general they are as easy and careless, and dispute as seldom, as any common

acquaintances may; for it is neither worth their while to put each other out of the way, nor to ruffle themselves.

When they meet in society, the cool couple are the best bred people in existence. The lady is seated in a corner among a little knot of lady friends, one of whom exclaims, "Why, I vow and declare there is your husband, my dear!" "Whose?—mine?" she says carelessly. "Ay, yours, and coming this way too." "How very odd!" says the lady, in a languid tone, "I thought he had been at Dover." The gentleman coming up, and speaking to all the other ladies and nodding slightly to his wife, it turns out that he has been at Dover, and has just now returned. "What a strange creature you are!" cries his wife; "and what on earth brought you here, I wonder?" "I came to look after you, *of course*," rejoins her husband. This is so pleasant a jest that the lady is mightily amused, as are all the other ladies, similarly situated, who are within hearing; and while they are enjoying it to the full, the gentleman nods again, turns upon his heel, and saunters away.

There are times, however, when his company is not so agreeable, though equally unexpected; such as when the lady has invited one or two particular friends to tea and scandal, and he happens to come home in the very midst of their diversion. It is a hundred chances to one that he remains in the house half an hour, but the lady is rather disturbed by the intrusion, notwithstanding, and reasons within herself—"I am sure I never interfere with him, and why should he interfere with me? It can scarcely be accidental; it never happens that I have a particular

reason for not wishing him to come home, but he always comes. It's very provoking and tiresome; and I am sure when he leaves me so much alone for his own pleasure, the least he could do would be to do as much for mine." Observing what passes in her mind, the gentleman, who has come home for his own accommodation, makes a merit of it with himself; arrives at the conclusion that it is the very last place in which he can hope to be comfortable; and determines, as he takes up his hat and cane, never to be so virtuous again.

Thus a great many cool couples go on until they are cold couples, and the grave has closed over their folly and indifference. Loss of name, station, character, life itself, has ensued from causes as slight as these, before now; and when gossips tell such tales, and aggravate their deformities, they elevate their hands and eyebrows, and call each other to witness what a cool couple Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So always were, even in the best of times.

THE PLAUSIBLE COUPLE.

THE plausible couple have many titles. They are "a delightful couple," "an affectionate couple," "a most agreeable couple," "a good-hearted couple," and "the best-natured couple in existence." The truth is, that the plausible couple are people of the world; and either the way of pleasing the world has grown much easier than it was in the days of the old man and his ass, or the old man was but a bad hand at it, and knew very little of the trade.

“But is it really possible to please the world?” says some doubting reader. It is indeed. Nay, it is not only very possible, but very easy. The ways are crooked, and sometimes foul and low. What then? A man need but crawl upon his hands and knees, know when to close his eyes and when his ears, when to stoop and when to stand upright; and if by the world is meant that atom of it in which he moves himself, he shall please it, never fear.

Now, it will be readily seen, that if a plausible man or woman have an easy means of pleasing the world by an adaptation of self to all its twistings and twinings, a plausible man *and* woman, or, in other words, a plausible couple, playing into each other's hands, and acting in concert, have a manifest advantage. Hence it is that the plausible couples scarcely ever fail of success on a pretty large scale; and hence it is that if the reader, laying down this unwieldy volume at the next full stop, will have the goodness to review his or her circle of acquaintance, and to search particularly for some man and wife with a large connection and a good name, not easily referable to their abilities or their wealth, he or she (that is, the male or female reader) will certainly find that gentleman and lady, on a very short reflection, to be a plausible couple.

The plausible couple are the most ecstatic people living: the most sensitive people—to merit—on the face of the earth. Nothing clever or virtuous escapes them. They have microscopic eyes for such endowments, and can find them anywhere. The plausible couple never fawn—oh, no! They don't even scruple to tell their friends of their faults. One is too

generous, another too candid ; a third has a tendency to think all people like himself, and to regard mankind as a company of angels ; a fourth is kind-hearted to a fault. " We never flatter, my dear Mrs. Jackson," say the plausible couple ; " we speak our minds. Neither you nor Mr. Jackson have faults enough. It may sound strangely, but it is true. You have not faults enough. You know our way—we must speak out, and always do. Quarrel with us for saying so, if you will ; but we repeat it—you have not faults enough !"

The plausible couple are no less plausible to each other than to third parties. They are always loving and harmonious. The plausible gentleman calls his wife " darling," and the plausible lady addresses him as " dearest." If it be Mr. and Mrs. Bobtail Widger, Mrs. Widger is " Lavinia, darling," and Mr. Widger is " Bobtail, dearest." Speaking of each other, they observe the same tender form. Mrs. Widger relates what " Bobtail" said, and Mr. Widger recounts what " darling" thought and did.

If you sit next to the plausible lady at a dinner-table, she takes the earliest opportunity of expressing her belief that you are acquainted with the Clickits ; she is sure she has heard the Clickits speak of you—she must not tell you in what terms, or you will take her for a flatterer. You admit a knowledge of the Clickits ; the plausible lady immediately launches out in their praise. She quite loves the Clickits. Were there ever such true-hearted, hospitable, excellent people—such a gentle, interesting little woman as Mrs. Clickit, or such a frank, unaffected creature as Mr. Clickit ? were there ever two people, in short, so little spoiled by the world as

they are? "As who, darling?" cries Mr. Widger, from the opposite side of the table. "The Clickits, dearest," replies Mrs. Widger. "Indeed you are right, darling," Mr. Widger rejoins; "the Clickits are a very high-minded, worthy, estimable couple." Mrs. Widger remarking that Bobtail always grows quite eloquent upon this subject, Mr. Widger admits that he feels very strongly whenever such people as the Clickits and some other friends of his (here he glances at the host and hostess) are mentioned; for they are an honour to human nature, and do one good to think of. "You know the Clickits, Mrs. Jackson?" he says, addressing the lady of the house. "No, indeed; we have not that pleasure," she replies. "You astonish me!" exclaims Mr. Widger: "not know the Clickits! why, you are the very people of all others who ought to be their bosom friends. You are kindred beings; you are one and the same thing: not know the Clickits! Now *will* you know the Clickits? Will you make a point of knowing them? Will you meet them in a friendly way at our house one evening, and be acquainted with them?" Mrs. Jackson will be quite delighted; nothing would give her more pleasure. "Then, Lavinia, my darling," says Mr. Widger, "mind you don't lose sight of that; now, pray take care that Mr. and Mrs. Jackson know the Clickits without loss of time. Such people ought not to be strangers to each other." Mrs. Widger books both families as the centre of attraction for her next party; and Mr. Widger, going on to expatiate upon the virtues of the Clickits, adds to their other moral qualities, that they keep one of the neatest phaetons in town, and have two thousand a year.

As the plausible couple never laud the merits of any absent person, without dexterously contriving that their praises shall reflect upon somebody who is present, so they never depreciate anything or anybody, without turning their depreciation to the same account. Their friend, Mr. Slummery, say they, is unquestionably a clever painter, and would no doubt be very popular, and sell his pictures at a very high price, if that cruel Mr. Fithers had not forestalled him in his department of art, and made it thoroughly and completely his own—Fithers, it is to be observed, being present and within hearing, and Slummery elsewhere. Is Mrs. Tabblewick really as beautiful as people say? Why, there indeed you ask them a very puzzling question, because there is no doubt that she is a very charming woman, and they have long known her intimately. She is no doubt beautiful, very beautiful; they once thought her the most beautiful woman ever seen; still if you press them for an honest answer, they are bound to say that this was before they had ever seen our lovely friend on the sofa (the sofa is hard by, and our lovely friend can't help hearing the whispers in which this is said); since that time, perhaps, they have been hardly fair judges; Mrs. Tabblewick is no doubt extremely handsome—very like our friend, in fact, in the form of the features—but in point of expression, and soul, and figure, and air altogether—oh, dear!

But while the plausible couple depreciate, they are still careful to preserve their character for amiability and kind feeling; indeed, the depreciation itself is often made to grow out of their excessive sympathy

and good-will. The plausible lady calls on a lady who dotes upon her children, and is sitting with a little girl upon her knee, enraptured by her artless replies, and protesting that there is nothing she delights in so much as conversing with these fairies; when the other lady inquires if she has seen young Mrs. Finching lately, and whether the baby has turned out a finer one than it promised to be. "Oh, dear!" cries the plausible lady, "you cannot think how often Bobtail and I have talked about poor Mrs. Finching—she is such a dear soul, and was so anxious that the baby should be a fine child—and very naturally, because she was very much here at one time, and there is, you know, a natural emulation among mothers—that it is impossible to tell you how much we have felt for her." "Is it weak or plain, or what?" inquires the other. "Weak or plain, my love," returns the plausible lady, "it's a fright—a perfect little fright; you never saw such a miserable creature in all your days. Positively you must not let her see one of these beautiful dears again, or you'll break her heart, you will indeed. Heaven bless this child, see how she is looking in my face! can you conceive anything prettier than that? If poor Mrs. Finching could only hope—but that's impossible—and the gifts of Providence, you know—— What *did* I do with my pocket-handkerchief!"

What prompts the mother, who dotes upon her children, to comment to her lord that evening on the plausible lady's engaging qualities and feeling heart, and what is it that procures Mr. and Mrs. Bobtail Widger an immediate invitation to dinner?

THE NICE LITTLE COUPLE.

A custom once prevailed in old-fashioned circles, that when a lady or gentleman was unable to sing a song, he or she should enliven the company with a story. As we find ourself in the predicament of not being able to describe (to our own satisfaction) nice little couples in the abstract, we purpose telling in this place a little story about a nice little couple of our acquaintance.

Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup are the nice little couple in question. Mr. Chirrup has the smartness, and something of the brisk, quick manner of a small bird. Mrs. Chirrup is the prettiest of all little women, and has the prettiest little figure conceivable. She has the neatest little foot, and the softest little voice, and the pleasantest little smile, and the tidiest little curls, and the brightest little eyes, and the quietest little manner, and is, in short, altogether one of the most engaging of all little women, dead or alive. She is a condensation of all the domestic virtues—a pocket edition of the young man's best companion—a little woman at a very high pressure, with an amazing quantity of goodness and usefulness in an exceedingly small space. Little as she is, Mrs. Chirrup might furnish forth matter for the moral equipment of a score of housewives, six feet high in their stockings—if, in the presence of ladies, we may be allowed the expression—and of corresponding robustness.

Nobody knows all this better than Mr. Chirrup, though he rather takes on that he don't. Accordingly

he is very proud of his better half, and evidently considers himself, as all other people consider him, rather fortunate in having her to wife. We say evidently, because Mr. Chirrup is a warm-hearted little fellow; and if you catch his eye when he has been slyly glancing at Mrs. Chirrup in company, there is a certain complacent twinkle in it, accompanied, perhaps, by a half-expressed toss of the head, which as clearly indicates what has been passing in his mind as if he had put it into words, and shouted it out through a speaking-trumpet. Moreover, Mr. Chirrup has a particularly mild and bird-like manner of calling Mrs. Chirrup "my dear"; and—for he is of a jocose turn—of cutting little witticisms upon her, and making her the subject of various harmless pleasantries, which nobody enjoys more thoroughly than Mrs. Chirrup herself. Mr. Chirrup, too, now and then affects to deplore his bachelor days, and to bemoan (with a marvellously contented and smirking face) the loss of his freedom, and the sorrow of his heart at having been taken captive by Mrs. Chirrup—all of which circumstances combine to show the secret triumph and satisfaction of Mr. Chirrup's soul.

We have already had occasion to observe that Mrs. Chirrup is an incomparable housewife. In all the arts of domestic arrangement and management, in all the mysteries of confectionery-making, pickling, and preserving, never was such a thorough adept as that nice little body. She is, besides, a cunning worker in muslin and fine linen, and a special hand at marketing to the very best advantage. But if there be one branch of housekeeping in which she

excels to an utterly unparalleled and unprecedented extent, it is in the important one of carving. A roast goose is universally allowed to be the great stumbling-block in the way of young aspirants to perfection in this department of science ; many promising carvers, beginning with legs of mutton, and preserving a good reputation through fillets of veal, sirloins of beef, quarters of lamb, fowls, and even ducks, have sunk before a roast goose, and lost caste and character for ever. To Mrs. Chirrup the resolving a goose into its smallest component parts is a pleasant pastime—a practical joke—a thing to be done in a minute or so, without the smallest interruption to the conversation of the time. No handing the dish over to an unfortunate man upon her right or left, no wild sharpening of the knife, no hacking and sawing at an unruly joint, no noise, no splash, no heat, no leaving off in despair—all is confidence and cheerfulness. The dish is set upon the table, the cover is removed ; for an instant, and only an instant, you observe that Mrs. Chirrup's attention is distracted ; she smiles, but heareth not. You proceed with your story ; meanwhile the glittering knife is slowly upraised, both Mrs. Chirrup's wrists are slightly but not ungracefully agitated, she compresses her lips for an instant, then breaks into a smile, and all is over. The legs of the bird slide gently down into a pool of gravy, the wings seem to melt from the body, the breast separates into a row of juicy slices, the smaller and more complicated parts of his anatomy are perfectly developed, a cavern of stuffing is revealed, and the goose is gone !

To dine with Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup is one of the

pleasantest things in the world. Mr. Chirrup has a bachelor friend, who lived with him in his own days of single blessedness, and to whom he is mightily attached. Contrary to the usual custom, this bachelor friend is no less a friend of Mrs. Chirrup's, and, consequently, whenever you dine with Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup, you meet the bachelor friend. It would put any reasonably-conditioned mortal into good-humour to observe the entire unanimity which subsists between these three; but there is a quiet welcome dimpling in Mrs. Chirrup's face, a bustling hospitality oozing, as it were, out of the waistcoat-pockets of Mr. Chirrup, and a patronising enjoyment of their cordiality and satisfaction on the part of the bachelor friend, which is quite delightful. On these occasions Mr. Chirrup usually takes an opportunity of rallying the friend on being single, and the friend retorts upon Mr. Chirrup for being married, at which moments some single young ladies present are like to die of laughter; and we have more than once observed them bestow looks upon the friend, which convinces us that his position is by no means a safe one, as, indeed, we hold no bachelor's to be who visits married friends and cracks jokes on wedlock, for certain it is that such men walk among traps and nets and pitfalls innumerable, and often find themselves down upon their knees at the altar rails, taking M. or N. for their wedded wives, before they know anything about the matter.

However, this is no business of Mr. Chirrup's, who talks, and laughs, and drinks his wine, and laughs again, and talks more, until it is time to repair to the drawing-room, where, coffee served and over, Mrs.

Chirrup prepares for a round game, by sorting the nicest possible little fish into the nicest possible little pools, and calling Mr. Chirrup to assist her, which Mr. Chirrup does. As they stand side by side, you find that Mr. Chirrup is the least possible shadow of a shade taller than Mrs. Chirrup, and that they are the neatest and best-matched little couple that can be, which the chances are ten to one against your observing with such effect at any other time, unless you see them in the street arm-in-arm, or meet them some rainy day trotting along under a very small umbrella. The round game (at which Mr. Chirrup is the merriest of the party) being done and over, in course of time a nice little tray appears, on which is a nice little supper ; and when that is finished likewise, and you have said "Good-night," you find yourself repeating a dozen times, as you ride home, that there never was such a nice little couple as Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup.

Whether it is that pleasant qualities, being packed more closely in small bodies than in large, come more readily to hand than when they are diffused over a wider space, and have to be gathered together for use, we don't know, but as a general rule—strengthened like all other rules by its exceptions—we hold that little people are sprightly and good-natured. The more sprightly and good-natured people we have, the better ; therefore, let us wish well to all nice little couples, and hope that they may increase and multiply.

THE EGOTISTICAL COUPLE.

EGOTISM in couples is of two kinds.—It is our purpose to show this by two examples.

The egotistical couple may be young, old, middle-aged, well-to-do, or ill-to-do; they may have a small family, a large family, or no family at all. There is no outward sign by which an egotistical couple may be known and avoided. They come upon you unawares; there is no guarding against them. No man can of himself be forewarned or forearmed against an egotistical couple.

The egotistical couple have undergone every calamity, and experienced every pleasurable and painful sensation of which our nature is susceptible. You cannot by possibility tell the egotistical couple anything they don't know, or describe to them anything they have not felt. They have been everything but dead. Sometimes we are tempted to wish they had been even that, but only in our uncharitable moments, which are few and far between.

We happened the other day, in the course of a morning call, to encounter an egotistical couple, nor were we suffered to remain long in ignorance of the fact, for our very first inquiry of the lady of the house brought them into active and vigorous operation. The inquiry was of course touching the lady's health, and the answer happened to be, that she had not been very well. "Oh, my dear!" said the egotistical lady, "don't talk of not being well. We have been in *such* a state since we saw you last!" —The lady of the house happening to remark that

her lord had not been well either, the egotistical gentleman struck in: "Never let Briggs complain of not being well—never let Briggs complain, my dear Mrs. Briggs, after what I have undergone within these six weeks. He doesn't know what it is to be ill, he hasn't the least idea of it; not the faintest conception."—"My dear," interposed his wife, smiling, "you talk as if it were almost a crime in Mr. Briggs not to have been as ill as we have been, instead of feeling thankful to Providence that both he and our dear Mrs. Briggs are in such blissful ignorance of real suffering."—"My love," returned the egotistical gentleman, in a low and pious voice, "you mistake me; I feel grateful—very grateful. I trust our friends may never purchase their experience as dearly as we have bought ours; I hope they never may!"

Having put down Mrs. Briggs upon this theme, and settled the question thus, the egotistical gentleman turned to us, and, after a few preliminary remarks, all tending towards and leading up to the point he had in his mind, inquired if we happened to be acquainted with the Dowager Lady Snorflerer. On our replying in the negative, he presumed we had often met Lord Slang, or beyond all doubt, that we were on intimate terms with Sir Chipkins Glogwog. Finding that we were equally unable to lay claim to either of these distinctions, he expressed great astonishment, and turning to his wife with a retrospective smile, inquired who it was that had told that capital story about the mashed potatoes. "Who, my dear?" returned the egotistical lady, "why, Sir Chipkins, of course; how can you ask! Don't you

remember his applying it to our cook, and saying that you and I were so like the prince and princess, that he could almost have sworn we were they?" "To be sure, I remember that," said the egotistical gentleman; "but are you quite certain that didn't apply to the other anecdote about the Emperor of Austria and the pump?" "Upon my word then, I think it did," replied his wife. "To be sure it did," said the egotistical gentleman, "it was Slang's story, I remember now, perfectly." However, it turned out, a few seconds afterwards, that the egotistical gentleman's memory was rather treacherous, as he began to have a misgiving that the story had been told by the Dowager Lady Snorflerer the very last time they dined there; but there appearing, on further consideration, strong circumstantial evidence tending to show that this couldn't be, inasmuch as the Dowager Lady Snorflerer had been, on the occasion in question, wholly engrossed by the egotistical lady, the egotistical gentleman recanted this opinion; and after laying the story at the doors of a great many great people, happily left it at last with the Duke of Scuttlewig: observing that it was not extraordinary he had forgotten his Grace hitherto, as it often happened that the names of those with whom we were upon the most familiar footing were the very last to present themselves to our thoughts.

It not only appeared that the egotistical couple knew everybody, but that scarcely any event of importance or notoriety had occurred for many years with which they had not been in some way or other connected. Thus we learned that when the well-known attempt upon the life of George the Third was

made by Hatfield in Drury Lane theatre, the egotistical gentleman's grandfather sat upon his right hand, and was the first man who collared him; and that the egotistical lady's aunt, sitting within a few boxes of the royal party, was the only person in the audience who heard his Majesty exclaim, "Charlotte, Charlotte, don't be frightened, don't be frightened; they're letting off squibs—they're letting off squibs." When the fire broke out, which ended in the destruction of the two Houses of Parliament, the egotistical couple, being at the time at a drawing-room window on Blackheath, then and there simultaneously exclaimed, to the astonishment of a whole party—"It's the House of Lords!" Nor was this a solitary instance of their peculiar discernment, for chancing to be (as by a comparison of dates and circumstances they afterwards found) in the same omnibus with Mr. Greenacre, when he carried his victim's head about town in a blue bag, they both remarked a singular twitching in the muscles of his countenance; and walking down Fish Street Hill, a few weeks since the egotistical gentleman said to his lady—slightly casting up his eyes to the top of the Monument—"There's a boy up there, my dear, reading a Bible. It's very strange. I don't like it.—In five seconds afterwards, sir," says the egotistical gentleman, bringing his hands together with one violent clap—"the lad was over!"

Diversifying these topics by the introduction of many others of the same kind, and entertaining us between whiles with a minute account of what weather and diet agreed with them, and what weather and diet disagreed with them, and at what time they

usually got up, and at what time went to bed, with many other particulars of their domestic economy too numerous to mention; the egotistical couple at length took their leave, and afforded us an opportunity of doing the same.

Mr. and Mrs. Sliverstone are an egotistical couple of another class, for all the lady's egotism is about her husband, and all the gentleman's about his wife. For example: Mr. Sliverstone is a clerical gentleman, and occasionally writes sermons, as clerical gentlemen do. If you happen to obtain admission at the street-door while he is so engaged, Mrs. Sliverstone appears on tiptoe, and, speaking in a solemn whisper, as if there were at least three or four particular friends upstairs, all upon the point of death, implores you to be very silent, for Mr. Sliverstone is composing, and she need not say how very important it is that he should not be disturbed. Unwilling to interrupt anything so serious, you hasten to withdraw, with many apologies; but this Mrs. Sliverstone will by no means allow, observing, that she knows you would like to see him, as it is very natural you should, and that she is determined to make a trial for you, as you are a great favourite. So you are led upstairs—still on tiptoe—to the door of a little back room, in which, as the lady informs you in a whisper, Mr. Sliverstone always writes. No answer being returned to a couple of soft taps, the lady opens the door, and there, sure enough, is Mr. Sliverstone, with dishevelled hair, powdering away with pen, ink, and paper, at a rate which, if he has any power of sustaining it, would settle the longest sermon in no time. At first he is too much

absorbed to be roused by this intrusion ; but presently looking up, says faintly, " Ah ! " and pointing to his desk with a weary and languid smile, extends his hand, and hopes you'll forgive him. Then Mrs. Sliverstone sits down beside him, and, taking his hand in hers, tells you how that Mr. Sliverstone has been shut up there ever since nine o'clock in the morning (it is by this time twelve at noon), and how she knows it cannot be good for his health, and is very uneasy about it. Unto this Mr. Sliverstone replies firmly, that " It must be done ; " which agonises Mrs. Sliverstone still more, and she goes on to tell you that such were Mr. Sliverstone's labours last week — what with the buryings, marryings, churchings, christenings, and all together — that when he was going up the pulpit stairs on Sunday evening, he was obliged to hold on by the rails, or he would certainly have fallen over into his own pew. Mr. Sliverstone, who has been listening and smiling meekly, says, " Not quite so bad as that, not quite so bad ! " He admits though, on cross-examination, that he *was* very near falling upon the verger who was following him up to bolt the door ; but adds, that it was his duty as a Christian to fall upon him, if need were, and that he, Mr. Sliverstone (and possibly the verger too), ought to glory in it.

This sentiment communicates new impulse to Mrs. Sliverstone, who launches into new praises of Mr. Sliverstone's worth and excellence, to which he listens in the same meek silence, save when he puts in a word of self-denial relative to some question or fact, as—" Not seventy-two christenings that week, my dear. Only seventy-one, only seventy-one." At

length his lady has quite concluded, and then he says, Why should he repine, why should he give way, why should he suffer his heart to sink within him? Is it he alone who toils and suffers? What has she gone through, he should like to know? What does she go through every day for him and for society?

With such an exordium, Mr. Sliverstone launches out into glowing praises of the conduct of Mrs. Sliverstone in the production of eight young children, and the subsequent rearing and fostering of the same; and thus the husband magnifies the wife, and the wife the husband.

This would be well enough if Mr. and Mrs. Sliverstone kept it to themselves, or even to themselves and a friend or two; but they do not. The more hearers they have, the more egotistical the couple become, and the more anxious they are to make believers in their merits. Perhaps this is the worst kind of egotism. It has not even the poor excuse of being spontaneous, but is the result of a deliberate system and malice aforethought. Mere empty-headed conceit excites our pity, but ostentatious hypocrisy awakens our disgust.

THE COUPLE WHO CODDLE THEMSELVES.

MRS. MERRYWINKLE'S maiden name was Chopper. She was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Chopper. Her father died when she was, as the play-books express it, "yet an infant;" and so old Mrs. Chopper, when her daughter married, made the house of her son-in-law her home from that time

henceforth, and set up her staff of rest with Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle are a couple who coddle themselves; and the venerable Mrs. Chopper is an aider and abettor in the same.

Mr. Merrywinkle is a rather lean and long-necked gentleman, middle-aged and middle-sized, and usually troubled with a cold in the head. Mrs. Merrywinkle is a delicate-looking lady, with very light hair, and is exceedingly subject to the same unpleasant disorder. The venerable Mrs. Chopper—who is strictly entitled to the appellation, her daughter not being very young, otherwise than by courtesy, at the time of her marriage, which was some years ago—is a mysterious old lady who lurks behind a pair of spectacles, and is afflicted with a chronic disease, respecting which she has taken a vast deal of medical advice, and referred to a vast number of medical books, without meeting any definition of symptoms that at all suits her, or enables her to say, “That’s my complaint.” Indeed, the absence of authentic information upon the subject of this complaint would seem to be Mrs. Chopper’s greatest ill, as in all other respects she is an uncommonly hale and hearty gentlewoman.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Chopper wear an extraordinary quantity of flannel, and have a habit of putting their feet in hot water to an unnatural extent. They likewise indulge in chamomile tea and such-like compounds, and rub themselves on the slightest provocation with camphorated spirits and other lotions applicable to mumps, sore-throat, rheumatism, or lumbago.

Mr. Merrywinkle’s leaving home to go to business

on a damp or wet morning is a very elaborate affair. He puts on wash-leather socks over his stockings, and india-rubber shoes above his boots, and wears under his waistcoat a cuirass of hare-skin. Besides these precautions, he winds a thick shawl round his throat, and blocks up his mouth with a large silk handkerchief. Thus accoutred, and furnished besides with a greatcoat and umbrella, he braves the dangers of the streets; travelling in severe weather at a gentle trot, the better to preserve the circulation, and bringing his mouth to the surface to take breath, but very seldom, and with the utmost caution. His office door opened, he shoots past his clerk at the same pace, and diving into his own private room, closes the door, examines the window-fastenings, and gradually unrobes himself; hanging his pocket-handkerchief on the fender to air, and determining to write to the newspapers about the fog, which, he says, "has really got to that pitch that it is quite unbearable."

In this last opinion, Mrs. Merrywinkle and her respected mother fully concur; for, though not present, their thoughts and tongues are occupied with the same subject, which is their constant theme all day. If anybody happens to call, Mrs. Merrywinkle opines that they must assuredly be mad, and her first salutation is, "Why, what in the name of goodness can bring you out in such weather? You know you *must* catch your death." This assurance is corroborated by Mrs. Chopper, who adds, in further confirmation, a dismal legend concerning an individual of her acquaintance who, making a call under precisely parallel circumstances, and being then in

the best health and spirits, expired in forty-eight hours afterwards, of a complication of inflammatory disorders. The visitor, rendered not altogether comfortable, perhaps, by this and other precedents, inquires very affectionately after Mr. Merrywinkle, but by so doing brings about no change of the subject; for Mr. Merrywinkle's name is inseparably connected with his complaints, and his complaints are inseparably connected with Mrs. Merrywinkle's; and when these are done with, Mrs. Chopper, who has been biding her time, cuts in with the chronic disorder—a subject upon which the amiable old lady never leaves off speaking until she is left alone, and very often not then.

But Mr. Merrywinkle comes home to dinner. He is received by Mrs. Merrywinkle and Mrs. Chopper, who, on his remarking that he thinks his feet are damp, turn pale as ashes and drag him upstairs, imploring him to have them rubbed directly with a dry, coarse towel. Rubbed they are, one by Mrs. Merrywinkle and one by Mrs. Chopper, until the friction causes Mr. Merrywinkle to make horrible faces, and look as if he had been smelling very powerful onions; when they desist, and the patient, provided for his better security with thick worsted stockings and list slippers, is borne downstairs to dinner. Now the dinner is always a good one, the appetites of the diners being delicate, and requiring a little of what Mrs. Merrywinkle calls “tittivation”; the secret of which is understood to lie in good cookery and tasteful spices, and which process is so successfully performed in the present instance, that both Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle eat a remarkably

good dinner, and even the afflicted Mrs. Chopper wields her knife and fork with much of the spirit and elasticity of youth. But Mr. Merrywinkle, in his desire to gratify his appetite, is not unmindful of his health, for he has a bottle of carbonate of soda with which to qualify his porter, and a little pair of scales in which to weigh it out. Neither in his anxiety to take care of his body is he unmindful of the welfare of his immortal part, as he always prays that for what he is going to receive he may be made truly thankful; and in order that he may be as thankful as possible, eats and drinks to the utmost.

Either from eating and drinking so much, or from being the victim of this constitutional infirmity, among others, Mr. Merrywinkle, after two or three glasses of wine, falls fast asleep; and he has scarcely closed his eyes, when Mrs. Merrywinkle and Mrs. Chopper fall asleep likewise. It is on awaking at tea-time that their most alarming symptoms prevail; for then Mr. Merrywinkle feels as if his temples were tightly bound round with the chain of the street-door, and Mrs. Merrywinkle as if she had made a hearty dinner of half-hundredweights, and Mrs. Chopper as if cold water were running down her back, and oyster-knives with sharp points were plunging of their own accord into her ribs. Symptoms like these are enough to make people peevish, and no wonder that they remain so until supper-time, doing little more than doze and complain, unless Mr. Merrywinkle calls out very loud to a servant "to keep that draught out," or rushes into the passage to flourish his fist in the countenance of the twopenny-postman, for daring to give such a

knock as he has just performed at the door of a private gentleman with nerves.

Supper, coming after dinner, should consist of some gentle provocative; and therefore the tittivating art is again in requisition, and again done honour to by Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle, still comforted and abetted by Mrs. Chopper. After supper, it is ten to one but the last-named old lady becomes worse, and is led off to bed with the chronic complaint in full vigour. Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle, having administered to her a warm cordial, which is something of the strongest, then repair to their own room, where Mr. Merrywinkle, with his legs and feet in hot water, superintends the mulling of some wine which he is to drink at the very moment he plunges into bed, while Mrs. Merrywinkle, in garments whose nature is unknown to and unimagined by all but married men, takes four small pills with a spasmodic look between each, and finally comes to something hot and fragrant out of another little saucepan, which serves as her composing-draught for the night.

There is another kind of couple who coddle themselves, and who do so at a cheaper rate and on more spare diet, because they are niggardly and parsimonious; for which reason they are kind enough to coddle their visitors too. It is unnecessary to describe them, for our readers may rest assured of the accuracy of these general principles: that all couples who coddle themselves are selfish and slothful—that they charge upon every wind that blows, every rain that falls, and every vapour that hangs in the air, the evils which arise from their own imprudence or the gloom which is engendered in their own tempers—

and that all men and women, in couples or otherwise, who fall into exclusive habits of self-indulgence, and forget their natural sympathy and close connection with everybody and everything in the world around them, not only neglect the first duty of life, but, by a happy retributive justice, deprive themselves of its truest and best enjoyment.

THE OLD COUPLE.

THEY are grandfather and grandmother to a dozen grown people, and have great-grandchildren besides; their bodies are bent, their hair is gray, their step tottering and infirm. Is this the lightsome pair whose wedding was so merry, and have the young couple indeed grown old so soon!

It seems but yesterday—and yet what a host of cares and griefs are crowded into the intervening time which, reckoned by them, lengthens out into a century! How many new associations have wreathed themselves about their hearts since then! The old time is gone, and a new time has come for others—not for them. They are but the rusting link that feebly joins the two, and is silently loosening its hold and dropping asunder.

It seems but yesterday—and yet three of their children have sunk into the grave, and the tree that shades it has grown quite old. One was an infant—they wept for him; the next a girl, a slight young thing too delicate for earth—her loss was hard indeed to bear. The third, a man. That was the worst of all, but even that grief is softened now.

It seems but yesterday—and yet how the gay and laughing faces of that bright morning have changed and vanished from above ground! Faint likenesses of some remain about them yet, but they are very faint and scarcely to be traced. The rest are only seen in dreams, and even they are unlike what they were, in eyes so old and dim.

One or two dresses from the bridal wardrobe are yet preserved. They are of a quaint and antique fashion, and seldom seen except in pictures. White has turned yellow, and brighter hues have faded. Do you wonder, child? The wrinkled face was once as smooth as yours, the eyes as bright, the shrivelled skin as fair and delicate. It is the work of hands that have been dust these many years.

Where are the fairy lovers of that happy day, whose annual return comes upon the old man and his wife like the echo of some village bell which has long been silent? Let yonder peevish bachelor, racked by rheumatic pains, and quarrelling with the world, let him answer to the question. He recollects something of a favourite playmate; her name was Lucy—so they tell him. He is not sure whether she was married, or went abroad, or died. It is a long while ago, and he don't remember.

Is nothing as it used to be; does no one feel, or think, or act, as in days of yore? Yes. There is an aged woman who once lived servant with the old lady's father, and is sheltered in an alms-house not far off. She is still attached to the family, and loves them all; she nursed the children in her lap, and tended in their sickness those who are no more. Her old mistress has still something of youth in

her eyes; the young ladies are like what she was but not quite so handsome, nor are the gentlemen as stately as Mr. Harvey used to be. She has seen a great deal of trouble; her husband and her son died long ago; but she has got over that, and is happy now—quite happy.

If ever her attachment to her old protectors were disturbed by fresher cares and hopes, it has long since resumed its former current. It has filled the void in the poor creature's heart, and replaced the love of kindred. Death has not left her alone, and this, with a roof above her head, and a warm hearth to sit by, makes her cheerful and contented. Does she remember the marriage of great-grandmamma? Ay, that she does, as well—as if it was only yesterday. You wouldn't think it to look at her now, and perhaps she ought not to say so of herself, but she was as smart a young girl then as you'd wish to see. She recollects she took a friend of hers upstairs to see Miss Emma dressed for church; her name was—ah! she forgets the name, but she remembers that she was a very pretty girl, and that she married not long afterwards, and lived—it has quite passed out of her mind where she lived, but she knows she had a bad husband who used her ill, and that she died in Lambeth workhouse. Dear, dear, in Lambeth workhouse!

And the old couple—have they no comfort or enjoyment of existence? See them among their grandchildren and great-grandchildren; how garrulous they are, how they compare one with another, and insist on likenesses which no one else can see; how gently the old lady lectures the girls on points

of breeding and decorum, and points the moral by anecdotes of herself in her young days; how the old gentleman chuckles over boyish feats and roguish tricks, and tells long stories of a "barring-out" achieved at the school he went to; which was very wrong, he tells the boys, and never to be imitated of course, but which he cannot help letting them know was very pleasant too—especially when he kissed the master's niece. This last, however, is a point on which the old lady is very tender, for she considers it a shocking and indelicate thing to talk about, and always says so whenever it is mentioned, never failing to observe that he ought to be very penitent for having been so sinful. So the old gentleman gets no further, and what the school-master's niece said afterwards (which he is always going to tell) is lost to posterity.

The old gentleman is eighty years old to-day—"Eighty years old, Crofts, and never had a headache," he tells the barber who shaves him (the barber being a young fellow, and very subject to that complaint). "That's a great age, Crofts," says the old gentleman. "I don't think it's sich a wery great age, sir," replied the barber. "Crofts," rejoins the old gentleman, "you're talking nonsense to me. Eighty not a great age?" "It's a wery great age, sir, for a gentleman to be as healthy and active as you are," returns the barber; "but my grandfather, sir, he was ninety-four." "You don't mean that, Crofts?" says the old gentleman. "I do indeed, sir," retorts the barber; "and as wiggerous as Julius Cæsar, my grandfather was." The old gentleman muses a little time, and then says, "What

did he die of, Crofts?" "He died accidentally, sir," returns the barber; "he didn't mean to do it. He always would go a-running about the streets—walking never satisfied *his* spirit—and he run against a post and died of a hurt in his chest." The old gentleman says no more until the shaving is concluded, and then he gives Crofts half a crown to drink his health. He is a little doubtful of the barber's veracity afterwards, and telling the anecdote to the old lady, affects to make very light of it—though to be sure (he adds) there was old Parr, and in some parts of England, ninety-five or so is a common age, quite a common age.

This morning the old couple are cheerful but serious, recalling old times as well as they can remember them, and dwelling upon many passages in their past lives which the day brings to mind. The old lady reads aloud, in a tremulous voice, out of a great Bible, and the old gentleman with his hand to his ear, listens with profound respect. When the Book is closed, they sit silent for a short space, and afterwards resume their conversation, with a reference, perhaps, to their dead children, as a subject not unsuited to that they have just left. By degrees they are led to consider which of those who survive are the most like those dearly-remembered objects, and so they fall into a less solemn strain, and become cheerful again.

How many people in all, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and one or two intimate friends of the family, dine together to-day, at the eldest son's, to congratulate the old couple, and wish them many happy returns, is a calculation beyond our powers:

but this we know, that the old couple no sooner present themselves, very sprucely and carefully attired, than there is a violent shouting and rushing forward of the younger branches with all manner of presents, such as pocket-books, pencil-cases, pen-wipers, watch-papers, pin-cushions, sleeve-buckles, worked-slippers, watch-guards, and even a nutmeg-grater--the latter article being presented by a very chubby and very little boy, who exhibits it in great triumph as an extraordinary variety. The old couple's emotion at these tokens of remembrance occasions quite a pathetic scene, of which the chief ingredients are a vast quantity of kissing and hugging, and repeated wipings of small eyes and noses with small square pocket-handkerchiefs, which don't come at all easily out of small pockets. Even the peevish bachelor is moved, and he says, as he presents the old gentleman with a queer sort of antique ring from his own finger, that he'll be de'ed if he doesn't think he looks younger than he did ten years ago.

But the great time is after dinner, when the dessert and wine are on the table, which is pushed back to make plenty of room, and they are all gathered in a large circle round the fire, for it is then--the glasses being filled, and everybody ready to drink the toast--that two great-grandchildren rush out at a given signal, and presently return, dragging in old Jane Adams leaning upon her crutched stick, and trembling with age and pleasure. Who so popular as poor old Jane, nurse and story-teller in ordinary to two generations; and who so happy as she, striving to bend her stiff limbs into a curtsy, while tears of pleasure steal down her withered cheeks!

The old couple sit side by side, and the old time seems like yesterday indeed. Looking back upon the path they have travelled, its dust and ashes disappear; the flowers that withered long ago, show brightly again upon its borders, and they grow young once more in the youth of those about them.

CONCLUSION.

WE have taken for the subjects of the foregoing moral essays, twelve samples of married couples, carefully selected from a large stock on hand, open to the inspection of all comers. These samples are intended for the benefit of the rising generation of both sexes, and, for easy and pleasant information, have been separately ticketed and labelled in the manner they have seen.

We have purposely excluded from consideration the couple in which the lady reigns paramount and supreme, holding such cases to be of a very unnatural kind, and like hideous births and other monstrous deformities, only to be discreetly and sparingly exhibited.

And here our self-imposed task would have ended, but that to those young ladies and gentlemen who are yet revolving singly round the church, awaiting the advent of that time when the mysterious laws of attraction shall draw them towards it in couples, we are desirous of addressing a few last words.

Before marriage and afterwards, let them learn to centre all their hopes of real and lasting happiness

in their own fireside; let them cherish the faith that in home, and all the English virtues which the love of home engenders, lies the only true source of domestic felicity; let them believe that round the household gods, contentment and tranquillity cluster in their gentlest and most graceful forms; and that many weary hunters of happiness through the noisy world, have learned this truth too late, and found a cheerful spirit and a quiet mind only at home at last.

How much may depend on the education of daughters and the conduct of mothers; how much of the brightest part of our own national character may be perpetuated by their wisdom or frittered away by their folly—how much of it may have been lost already, and how much more in danger of vanishing every day—are questions too mighty for discussion here, but well deserving a little serious consideration from all young couples nevertheless.

To that one young couple on whose bright destiny the thoughts of nations are fixed, may the youth of England look, and not in vain, for an example. From that one young couple, blessed and favoured as they are, may they learn that even the glare and glitter of a court, the splendour of a palace, and the pomp and glory of a throne, yield in their power of conferring happiness, to domestic worth and virtue. From that one young couple may they learn that the crown of a great empire, costly and jewelled though it be, gives place in the estimation of a queen to the plain gold ring that links her woman's nature to that of tens of thousands of her humble subjects, and guards in her woman's heart

one secret store of tenderness, whose proudest boast shall be that it knows no royalty save Nature's own, and no pride of birth but being the child of Heaven!

So shall the highest young couple in the land for once hear the truth, when men throw up their caps, and cry with loving shouts—

GOD BLESS THEM.

Public Life of Mr. Tulrumbles,
Once Mayor of Mudfog.

Public Life of Mr. Tulrumbles,

Once Mayor of Mudfog.

MUDFOG is a pleasant town—a remarkably pleasant town—situated in a charming hollow by the side of a river, from which river Mudfog derives an agreeable scent of pitch, tar, coals, and rope-yarn, a roving population in oilskin hats, a pretty steady influx of drunken bargemen, and a great many other maritime advantages. There is a good deal of water about Mudfog, and yet it is not exactly the sort of town for a watering-place, either. Water is a perverse sort of element at the best of times, and in Mudfog it is particularly so. In winter, it comes oozing down the streets and tumbling over the fields—nay, rushes into the very cellars and kitchens of the houses, with a lavish prodigality that might well be dispensed with; but in the hot summer weather it *will* dry up, and turn green; and, although green is a very good colour in its way, especially in grass, still it certainly is not becoming to water; and it cannot be denied that the beauty of Mudfog is rather impaired, even by this trifling circumstance. Mudfog is a healthy place—very healthy; damp, perhaps, but none the worse for that. It's quite a mistake to suppose that damp is unwholesome: plants thrive best in damp situations, and why shouldn't men? The inhabitants of Mudfog are unanimous in asserting that there exists not a finer race of people on the face of the earth: here we have an indisputable and veracious

contradiction of the vulgar error at once. So, admitting Mudfog to be damp, we distinctly state that it is salubrious.

The town of Mudfog is extremely picturesque. Limehouse and Ratcliff Highway are both something like it, but they give you a very faint idea of Mudfog. There are a great many more public-houses in Mudfog—more than in Ratcliff Highway and Limehouse put together. The public buildings, too, are very imposing. We consider the town-hall one of the finest specimens of shed architecture, extant: it is a combination of the pig-sty and tea-garden-box orders; and the simplicity of its design is of surpassing beauty. The idea of placing a large window on one side of the door, and a small one on the other, is particularly happy. There is a fine bold Doric beauty, too, about the padlock and scraper, which is strictly in keeping with the general effect.

In this room do the mayor and corporation of Mudfog assemble together in solemn council for the public weal. Seated on the massive wooden benches, which, with the table in the centre, form the only furniture of the whitewashed apartment, the sage men of Mudfog spend hour after hour in grave deliberation. Here they settle at what hour of the night the public-houses shall be closed, at what hour of the morning they shall be permitted to open, how soon it shall be lawful for people to eat their dinner on church days, and other great political questions; and sometimes, long after silence has fallen on the town, and the distant lights from the shops and houses have ceased to twinkle, like far-off stars, to the sight of the boatmen on the river, the illumination in the two unequal-

sized windows of the town-hall, warns the inhabitants of Mudfog that its little body of legislators, like a larger and better-known body of the same genus, a great deal more noisy, and not a whit more profound, are patriotically dozing away in company, far into the night, for their country's good.

Among this knot of sage and learned men, no one was so eminently distinguished, during many years, for the quiet modesty of his appearance and demeanour, as Nicholas Tulrumbles, the well known coal-dealer. However exciting the subject of discussion, however animated the tone of the debate, or however warm the personalities exchanged (and even in Mudfog we get personal sometimes), Nicholas Tulrumbles was always the same. To say truth, Nicholas, being an industrious man, and always up betimes, was apt to fall asleep when a debate began, and to remain asleep till it was over, when he would wake up very much refreshed, and give his vote with the greatest complacency. The fact was, that Nicholas Tulrumbles, knowing that everybody there had made up his mind beforehand, considered the talking as just a long botheration about nothing at all; and to the present hour it remains a question, whether, on this point at all events, Nicholas Tulrumbles was not pretty near right.

Time, which strews a man's head with silver, sometimes fills his pockets with gold. As he gradually performed one good office for Nicholas Tulrumbles, he was obliging enough not to omit the other. Nicholas began life in a wooden tenement of four feet square, with a capital of two and

ninepence, and a stock in trade of three bushels and a half of coals, exclusive of the large lump which hung, by way of sign-board, outside. Then he enlarged the shed, and kept a truck; then he left the shed, and the truck too, and started a donkey and a Mrs. Tulrumbles; then he moved again and set up a cart; the cart was soon afterwards exchanged for a wagon; and so he went on like his great predecessor Whittington—only without a cat for a partner—increasing in wealth and fame, until at last he gave up business altogether, and retired with Mrs. Tulrumbles and family to Mudfog Hall, which he had himself erected, on something which he attempted to delude himself into the belief was a hill, about a quarter of a mile distant from the town of Mudfog.

About this time, it began to be murmured in Mudfog that Nicholas Tulrumbles was growing vain and haughty; that prosperity and success had corrupted the simplicity of his manners, and tainted the natural goodness of his heart; in short, that he was setting up for a public character, and a great gentleman, and affected to look down upon his old companions with compassion and contempt. Whether these reports were at the time well founded or not, certain it is that Mrs. Tulrumbles very shortly afterwards started a four-wheeled chaise, driven by a tall postillion in a yellow cap; that Mr. Tulrumbles, junior, took to smoking cigars, and calling the footman a “feller”; and that Mr. Tulrumbles from that time forth, was no more seen in his old seat in the chimney-corner of the Lighterman’s Arms at night. This looked bad; but, more than this,

it began to be observed that Mr. Nicholas Tulrumbles attended the corporation meetings more frequently than heretofore; and he no longer went to sleep as he had done for so many years, but propped his eyelids open with his two forefingers; that he read the newspapers by himself at home; and that he was in the habit of indulging abroad in distant and mysterious allusions to "masses of people," and "the property of the country," and "productive power," and "the monied interest": all of which denoted and proved that Nicholas Tulrumbles was either mad, or worse; and it puzzled the good people of Mudfog amazingly.

At length, about the middle of the month of October, Mr. Tulrumbles and family went up to London—the middle of October being, as Mrs. Tulrumbles informed her acquaintance in Mudfog, the very height of the fashionable season.

Somehow or other, just about this time, despite the health-preserving air of Mudfog, the mayor died. It was a most extraordinary circumstance: he had lived in Mudfog for eighty-five years. The corporation didn't understand it at all; indeed it was with great difficulty that one old gentleman, who was a great stickler for forms, was dissuaded from proposing a vote of censure on such unaccountable conduct. Strange as it was, however, die he did, without taking the slightest notice of the corporation; and the corporation were imperatively called upon to elect his successor. So they met for the purpose; and being very full of Nicholas Tulrumbles just then, and Nicholas Tulrumbles being a very important man, they elected him, and wrote off to London by the

very next post to acquaint Nicholas Tulrumbles with his new elevation.

Now, it being November time, and Mr. Nicholas Tulrumbles being in the capital, it fell out that he was present at the lord mayor's show and dinner; at sight of the glory and splendour whereof, he, Mr. Tulrumbles, was greatly mortified, inasmuch as the reflection would force itself on his mind, that, had he been born in London instead of in Mudfog, he might have been a lord mayor too, and have patronised the judges, and been affable to the lord chancellor, and friendly with the premier, and coldly condescending to the secretary to the Treasury, and have dined with a flag behind his back, and done a great many other acts and deeds which unto lord mayors of London peculiarly appertain. The more he thought of the lord mayor, the more enviable a personage he seemed. To be a king was all very well; but what was the king to the lord mayor! When the king made a speech, everybody knew it was somebody else's writing; whereas here was the lord mayor, talking away for half an hour—all out of his own head—amidst the enthusiastic applause of the whole company, while it was notorious that the king might talk to his Parliament till he was black in the face without getting so much as a single cheer. As all these reflections passed through the mind of Mr. Nicholas Tulrumbles, the lord mayor of London appeared to him the greatest sovereign on the face of the earth, beating the Emperor of Russia all to nothing, and leaving the Great Mogul immeasurably behind.

Mr. Nicholas Tulrumbles was pondering over these things, and inwardly cursing the fates which had pitched his coal-shed in Mudfog, when the letter of the corporation was put into his hand. A crimson flush mantled over his face as he read it, for visions of brightness were already dancing before his imagination.

"My dear," said Mr. Tulrumbles to his wife, "they have elected me mayor of Mudfog."

"Lor-a-mussy!" said Mrs. Tulrumbles; "why what's become of old Sniggs?"

"The late Mr. Sniggs, Mrs. Tulrumbles," said Mr. Tulrumbles sharply, for he by no means approved of the notion of unceremoniously designating a gentleman who filled the high office of mayor, as "Old Sniggs" — "the late Mr. Sniggs, Mrs. Tulrumbles, is dead."

The communication was very unexpected; but Mrs. Tulrumbles only ejaculated "Lor - a - mussy!" once again, as if a mayor were a mere ordinary christian, at which Mr. Tulrumbles frowned gloomily.

"What a pity 'tain't in London, ain't it?" said Mrs. Tulrumbles, after a short pause; "what a pity 'tain't in London, where you might have had a show."

"I *might* have a show in Mudfog, if I thought proper, I apprehend," said Mr. Tulrumbles mysteriously.

"Lor! so you might, I declare," replied Mrs. Tulrumbles.

"And a good one too," said Mr. Tulrumbles.

"Delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulrumbles.

"One which would rather astonish the ignorant people down there," said Mr. Tulrumbles.

"It would kill them with envy," said Mrs. Tulrumble.

So it was agreed that his Majesty's lieges in Mudfog should be astonished with splendour, and slaughtered with envy, and that such a show should take place as had never been seen in that town, or in any other town before—no, not even in London itself.

On the very next day after the receipt of the letter, down came the tall postillion in a post-chaise—not upon one of the horses, but inside—actually inside the chaise—and, driving up to the very door of the town-hall, where the corporation were assembled, delivered a letter, written by the Lord knows who, and signed by Nicholas Tulrumble, in which Nicholas said, all through four sides of closely-written, gilt-edged, hot-pressed, Bath post letter paper, that he responded to the call of his fellow-townsmen with feelings of heartfelt delight; that he accepted the arduous office which their confidence had imposed upon him; that they would never find him shrinking from the discharge of his duty; that he would endeavour to execute his functions with all that dignity which their magnitude and importance demanded; and a great more to the same effect. But even this was not all. The tall postillion produced from his right-hand top-boot, a damp copy of that afternoon's number of the county paper; and there, in large type, running the whole length of the very first column, was a long address from Nicholas Tulrumble to the inhabitants of Mudfog, in which he said that he cheerfully complied with their requisition, and, in short, as if to prevent any mistake about the matter, told them over again what

a grand fellow he meant to be, in very much the same terms as those in which he had already told them all about the matter in his letter.

The corporation stared at one another very hard at all this, and then looked as if for explanation to the tall postillion, but as the tall postillion was intently contemplating the gold tassel on the top of his yellow cap, and could have afforded no explanation whatever, even if his thoughts had been entirely disengaged, they contented themselves with coughing very dubiously, and looking very grave. The tall postillion then delivered another letter, in which Nicholas Tulrumbles informed the corporation, that he intended repairing to the town-hall, in grand state and gorgeous procession, on the Monday afternoon next ensuing. At this the corporation looked still more solemn; but, as the epistle wound up with a formal invitation to the whole body to dine with the mayor on that day, at Mudfog Hall, Mudfog Hill, Mudfog, they began to see the fun of the thing directly, and sent back their compliments, and they'd be sure to come.

Now there happened to be in Mudfog, as somehow or other there does happen to be, in almost every town in the British dominions, and perhaps in foreign dominions too—we think it very likely, but, being no great traveller, cannot distinctly say—there happened to be, in Mudfog, a merry-tempered, pleasant-faced, good-for-nothing sort of vagabond, with an invincible dislike to manual labour, and an unconquerable attachment to strong beer and spirits, whom everybody knew, and nobody, except his wife, took the trouble to quarrel with, who inherited from

his ancestors the appellation of Edward Twigger, and rejoiced in the *sobriquet* of Bottle-nosed Ned. He was drunk upon the average once a day, and penitent upon an equally fair calculation once a month; and when he was penitent, he was invariably in the very last stage of maudlin intoxication. He was a ragged, roving, roaring kind of fellow, with a burly form, a sharp wit, and a ready head, and could turn his hand to anything when he chose to do it. He was by no means opposed to hard labour on principle, for he would work away at a cricket-match by the day together—running, and catching, and batting, and bowling, and revelling in toil which would exhaust a galley-slave. He would have been invaluable to a fire-office; never was a man with such a natural taste for pumping engines, running up ladders, and throwing furniture out of two-pair-of-stairs windows: nor was this the only element in which he was at home; he was a humane society in himself, a portable drag, an animated life-preserver, and had saved more people, in his time, from drowning, than the Plymouth life-boat, or Captain Manby's apparatus. With all these qualifications, notwithstanding his dissipation, Bottle-nosed Ned was a general favourite; and the authorities of Mudfog, remembering his numerous services to the population, allowed him in return to get drunk in his own way, without the fear of stocks, fine, or imprisonment. He had a general license, and he showed his sense of the compliment by making the most of it.

We have been thus particular in describing the character and avocations of Bottle-nosed Ned,

because it enables us to introduce a fact politely, without hauling it into the reader's presence with indecent haste by the head and shoulders, and brings us very naturally to relate, that on the very same evening on which Mr. Nicholas Tulrumbles and family returned to Mudfog, Mr. Tulrumbles's new secretary, just imported from London, with a pale face and light whiskers, thrust his head, down to the very bottom of his neckcloth-tie, in at the tap-room door of the Lighterman's Arms, and inquiring whether one Ned Twigger was luxuriating within, announced himself as the bearer of a message from Nicholas Tulrumbles, Esquire, requiring Mr. Twigger's immediate attendance at the hall, on private and particular business. It being by no means Mr. Twigger's interest to affront the mayor, he rose from the fireplace with a slight sigh, and followed the light whiskered secretary through the dirt and wet of Mudfog streets, up to Mudfog Hall, without further ado.

Mr. Nicholas Tulrumbles was seated in a small cavern with a skylight, which he called his library, sketching out a plan of the procession on a large sheet of paper; and into the cavern the secretary ushered Ned Twigger.

"Well, Twigger!" said Nicholas Tulrumbles condescendingly.

There was a time when Twigger would have replied, "Well, Nick!" but that was in the days of the truck, and a couple of years before the donkey; so he only bowed.

"I want you to go into training, Twigger," said Mr. Tulrumbles.

"What for, sir?" inquired Ned, with a stare.

"Hush, hush, Twigger!" said the mayor. "Shut the door, Mr. Jennings. Look here, Twigger."

As the mayor said this, he unlocked a high closet, and disclosed a complete suit of brass armour, of gigantic dimensions.

"I want you to wear this next Monday, Twigger," said the mayor.

"Bless your heart and soul, sir!" replied Ned, "you might as well ask me to wear a seventy-four pounder, or a cast-iron boiler."

"Nonsense, Twigger, nonsense!" said the mayor.

"I couldn't stand under it, sir," said Twigger; "it would make mashed potatoes of me, if I attempted it."

"Pooh, pooh, Twigger!" returned the mayor. "I tell you I have seen it done with my own eyes, in London, and the man wasn't half such a man as you are, either."

"I should as soon have thought of a man's wearing the case of an eight-day clock to save his linen," said Twigger, casting a look of apprehension at the brass suit.

"It's the easiest thing in the world," rejoined the mayor.

"It's nothing," said Mr. Jennings.

"When you're used to it," added Ned.

"You do it by degrees," said the mayor. "You would begin with one piece to-morrow, and two the next day, and so on, till you had got it all on. Mr. Jennings, give Twigger a glass of rum. Just try the breast-plate, Twigger. Stay; take another glass of rum first. Help me to lift it, Mr. Jennings.

Stand firm, Twigger ! There !—it isn't half as heavy as it looks, is it ? ”

Twigger was a good strong stout fellow ; so, after a great deal of staggering, he managed to keep himself up, under the breast-plate, and even contrived, with the aid of another glass of rum, to walk about in it, and the gauntlets into the bargain. He made a trial of the helmet, but was not equally successful, inasmuch as he tipped over instantly — an accident which Mr. Tulrumbles clearly demonstrated to be occasioned by his not having a counteracting weight of brass on his legs.

“ Now, wear that with grace and propriety on Monday next,” said Tulrumbles, “ and I'll make your fortune.”

“ I'll try what I can do, sir,” said Twigger.

“ It must be kept a profound secret,” said Tulrumbles.

“ Of course, sir,” replied Twigger.

“ And you must be sober,” said Tulrumbles ;
“ perfectly sober.”

Mr. Twigger at once solemnly pledged himself to be as sober as a judge, and Nicholas Tulrumbles was satisfied ; although, had we been Nicholas, we should certainly have exacted some promise of a more specific nature ; inasmuch as, having attended the Mudfog assizes in the evening more than once, we can solemnly testify to having seen judges with very strong symptoms of dinner under their wigs. However, that's neither here nor there.

The next day, and the day following, and the day after that, Ned Twigger was securely locked up in the small cavern with the skylight, hard at work

at the armour. With every additional piece he could manage to stand upright in, he had an additional glass of rum ; and at last, after many partial suffocations, he contrived to get on the whole suit, and to stagger up and down the room in it, like an intoxicated effigy from Westminster Abbey.

Never was man so delighted as Nicholas Tulrumble ; never was woman so charmed as Nicholas Tulrumble's wife. Here was a sight for the common people of Mudfog ! A live man in brass armour ! Why, they would go wild with wonder !

The day—*the* Monday—arrived.

If the morning had been made to order, it couldn't have been better adapted to the purpose. They never showed a better fog in London on Lord Mayor's day, than enwrapped the town of Mudfog on that eventful occasion. It had risen slowly and surely from the green and stagnant water with the first light of morning, until it reached a little above the lamp-post tops ; and there it had stopped, with a sleepy, sluggish obstinacy, which made defiance to the sun, who had got up very bloodshot about the eyes, as if he had been at a drinking-party over night, and was doing his day's work with the worst possible grace. The thick damp mist hung over the town like a huge gauze curtain. All was dim and dismal. The church steeples had bidden a temporary adieu to the world below ; and every object of lesser importance—houses, barns, hedges, trees, and barges—had all taken the veil.

The church clock struck one. A cracked trumpet from the front garden of Mudfog Hall produced a feeble flourish, as if some asthmatic person had coughed into

it accidentally ; the gate flew open, and out came a gentleman on a moist-sugar coloured charger, intended to represent a herald, but bearing a much stronger resemblance to a court-card on horseback. This was one of the circus people, who always came down to Mudfog at that time of the year, and who had been engaged by Nicholas Tulrumbly expressly for the occasion. There was the horse, whisking his tail about, balancing himself on his hind-legs, and flourishing away with his forefeet, in a manner which would have gone to the hearts and souls of any reasonable crowd. But a Mudfog crowd never was a reasonable one, and in all probability never will be. Instead of scattering the very fog with their shouts, as they ought most indubitably to have done, and were fully intended to do, by Nicholas Tulrumbly, they no sooner recognised the herald, than they began to growl forth the most unqualified disapprobation at the bare notion of his riding like any other man. If he had come out on his head, indeed, or jumping through a hoop, or flying through a red-hot drum, or even standing on one leg with his other foot in his mouth, they might have had something to say to him ; but for a professional gentleman to sit astride in the saddle, with his feet in the stirrups, was rather too good a joke. So the herald was a decided failure, and the crowd hooted with great energy, as he pranced ingloriously away.

On the procession came. We are afraid to say how many supernumeraries there were, in striped shirts and black velvet caps, to imitate the London watermen, or how many base imitations of running-footmen, or how many banners, which, owing to the

heaviness of the atmosphere, could by no means be prevailed on to display their inscriptions: still less do we feel disposed to relate how the men who played the wind instruments, looking up into the sky (we mean the fog) with musical fervour, walked through pools of water and hillocks of mud, till they covered the powdered heads of the running-footmen aforesaid with splashes that looked curious, but not ornamental; or how the barrel-organ performer put on the wrong stop, and played one tune while the band played another; or how the horses, being used to the arena, and not to the streets, would stand still and dance, instead of going on and prancing; all of which are matters which might be dilated upon to great advantage, but which we have not the least intention of dilating upon, notwithstanding.

Oh! it was a grand and beautiful sight to behold a corporation in glass coaches, provided at the sole cost and charge of Nicholas Tulrumbles, coming rolling along, like a funeral out of mourning, and to watch the attempts the corporation make to look great and solemn, when Nicholas Tulrumbles himself, in the four-wheel chaise, with the tall postillion, rolled out after them, with Mr. Jennings on one side to look like a chaplain, and a supernumerary on the other, with an old life-guardsman's sabre, to imitate the sword-bearer; and to see the tears rolling down the faces of the mob as they screamed with merriment. This was beautiful! and so was the appearance of Mrs. Tulrumbles and son, as they bowed with grave dignity out of their coach-window to all the dirty faces that were laughing around them. But it is not even with this that we have to do, but with

the sudden stopping of the procession at another blast of the trumpet, whereat, and whereupon, a profound silence ensued, and all eyes were turned towards Mudfog Hall, in the confident anticipation of some new wonder.

"They won't laugh now, Mr. Jennings," said Nicholas Tulrumbles.

"I think not, sir," said Mr. Jennings.

"See how eager they look," said Nicholas Tulrumbles. "Aha! the laugh will be on our side now; eh, Mr. Jennings?"

"No doubt of that, sir," replied Mr. Jennings; and Nicholas Tulrumbles, in a state of pleasurable excitement, stood up in the four-wheel chaise, and telegraphed gratification to the mayoress behind.

While all this was going forward, Ned Twigger had descended into the kitchen of Mudfog Hall for the purpose of indulging the servants with a private view of the curiosity that was to burst upon the town; and, somehow or other, the footman was so companionable, and the housemaid so kind, and the cook so friendly, that he could not resist the offer of the first-mentioned to sit down and take something—just to drink success to master in.

So down Ned Twigger sat himself in his brass livery on the top of the kitchen-table; and in a mug of something strong, paid for by the unconscious Nicholas Tulrumbles, and provided by the companionable footman, drank success to the mayor and his procession; and, as Ned laid by his helmet to imbibe the something strong, the companionable footman put it on his own head, to the immeasurable and unrecordable delight of the cook and housemaid. The

companionable fooman was very facetious to Ned, and Ned was very gallant to the cook and housemaid by turns. They were all very cosy and comfortable ; and the something strong went briskly round.

At last Ned Twigger was loudly called for, by the procession people ; and, having had his helmet fixed on, in a very complicated manner, by the companionable footman, and the kind housemaid, and the friendly cook, he walked gravely forth, and appeared before the multitude.

The crowd roared : it was not with wonder, it was not with surprise ; it was most decidedly and unquestionably with laughter.

“What !” said Mr. Tulrumbles, starting up in the four-wheel chaise. “Laughing ? If they laugh at a man in real brass armour, they’d laugh when their own fathers were dying. Why doesn’t he go into his place, Mr. Jennings ? What’s he rolling down towards us for ? he has no business here !”

“I am afraid, sir——” faltered Mr. Jennings.

“Afraid of what, sir ?” said Nicholas Tulrumbles, looking up into the secretary’s face.

“I am afraid he’s drunk, sir ;” replied Mr. Jennings.

Nicholas Tulrumbles took one look at the extraordinary figure that was bearing down upon them ; and then, clasping his secretary by the arm, uttered an audible groan in anguish of spirit.

It is a melancholy fact that Mr. Twigger, having full license to demand a single glass of rum on the putting on of every piece of the armour, got, by some means or other, rather out of his calculation in the hurry and confusion of preparation, and drank

about four glasses to a piece instead of one, not to mention the something strong which went on the top of it. Whether the brass armour checked the natural flow of perspiration, and thus prevented the spirit from evaporating, we are not scientific enough to know; but, whatever the cause was, Mr. Twigger no sooner found himself outside the gate of Mudfog Hall, than he also found himself in a very considerable state of intoxication; and hence his extraordinary style of progressing. This was bad enough, but, as if fate and fortune had conspired against Nicholas Tulrumbles, Mr. Twigger, not having been penitent for a good calendar month, took it into his head to be most especially and particularly sentimental, just when his repentance could have been most conveniently dispensed with. Immense tears were rolling down his cheeks, and he was vainly endeavouring to conceal his grief by applying to his eyes a blue cotton pocket-handkerchief with white spots—an article not strictly in keeping with a suit of armour some three hundred years old, or thereabouts.

“Twigger, you villain!” said Nicholas Tulrumbles, quite forgetting his dignity, “go back.”

“Never,” said Ned. “I’m a miserable wretch. I’ll never leave you.”

The bystanders of course received this declaration with acclamations of “That’s right, Ned; don’t!”

“I don’t intend it,” said Ned, with all the obstinacy of a very tipsy man. “I’m very unhappy. I’m the wretched father of an unfortunate family; but I am very faithful, sir. I’ll never leave you.” Having reiterated this obliging promise, Ned proceeded in broken words to harangue the crowd upon

the number of years he had lived in Mudfog, the excessive respectability of his character, and other topics of the like nature.

"Here! will anybody lead him away?" said Nicholas: "if they'll call on me afterwards, I'll reward them well."

Two or three men stepped forward, with the view of bearing Ned off, when the secretary interposed.

"Take care! take care!" said Mr. Jennings. "I beg your pardon, sir; but they'd better not go too near him, because, if he falls over, he'll certainly crush somebody."

At this hint the crowd retired on all sides to a very respectful distance, and left Ned, like the Duke of Devonshire, in a little circle of his own.

"But, Mr. Jennings," said Nicholas Tulrumbles "he'll be suffocated."

"I'm very sorry for it, sir," replied Mr. Jennings; "but nobody can get that armour off, without his own assistance. I'm quite certain of it from the way he put it on."

Here Ned wept dolefully, and shook his helmeted head, in a manner that might have touched a heart of stone; but the crowd had not hearts of stone, and they laughed heartily.

"Dear me, Mr. Jennings," said Nicholas, turning pale at the possibility of Ned's being smothered in his antique costume—"dear me, Mr. Jennings, can nothing be done with him?"

"Nothing at all," replied Ned, "nothing at all. Gentlemen, I'm an unhappy wretch. I'm a body gentlemen, in a brass coffin."

At this poetical idea of his own conjuring up, Ned

cried so much that the people began to get sympathetic, and to ask what Nicholas Tulrumbles meant by putting a man into such a machine as that; and one individual in a hairy waistcoat like the top of a trunk, who had previously expressed his opinion that if Ned hadn't been a poor man, Nicholas wouldn't have dared do it, hinted at the propriety of breaking the four-wheel chaise, or Nicholas's head, or both, which last compound proposition the crowd seemed to consider a very good notion.

It was not acted upon, however, for it had hardly been broached, when Ned Twigger's wife made her appearance abruptly in the little circle before noticed, and Ned no sooner caught a glimpse of her face and form, than from the mere force of habit he set off towards his home just as fast as his legs could carry him; and that was not very quick in the present instance either, for, however ready they might have been to carry *him*, they couldn't get on very well under the brass armour. So, Mrs. Twigger had plenty of time to denounce Nicholas Tulrumbles to his face: to express her opinion that he was a decided monster; and to intimate that, if her ill-used husband sustained any personal damage from the brass armour, she would have the law of Nicholas Tulrumbles for manslaughter. When she had said all with due vehemence, she posted after Ned, who was dragging himself along as best he could, and deploring his unhappiness in most dismal tones.

What a wailing and screaming Ned's children raised when he got home at last! Mrs. Twigger tried to undo the armour, first in one place, and then in another, but she couldn't manage it; so she tumbled

Ned into bed, helmet, armour, gauntlets, and all. Such a creaking as the bedstead made, under Ned's weight in his new suit ! It didn't break down though ; and there Ned lay, like the anonymous vessel in the bay of Biscay, till next day, drinking barley-water, and looking miserable ; and every time he groaned, his good lady said it served him right, which was all the consolation Ned Twigger got.

Nicholas Tulrumble and the gorgeous procession went on together to the town-hall, amid the hisses and groans of all the spectators, who had suddenly taken it into their heads to consider poor Ned a martyr. Nicholas was formally installed in his new office, in acknowledgment of which ceremony he delivered himself of a speech, composed by the secretary, which was very long, and no doubt very good, only the noise of the people outside prevented anybody from hearing it, but Nicholas Tulrumble himself. After which, the procession got back to Mudfog Hall any how it could ; and Nicholas and the corporation sat down to dinner.

But the dinner was flat, and Nicholas was disappointed. They were such dull, sleepy old fellows, that corporation. Nicholas made quite as long speeches as the lord mayor of London had done, nay, he said the very same things that the lord mayor of London had said, and the deuce a cheer the corporation gave him. There was only one man in the party who was thoroughly awake ; and he was insolent, and called him Nick. Nick ! What would be the consequence, thought Nicholas, of anybody presuming to call the lord mayor of London "Nick !" He should like to know what the sword-bearer would say to

that ; or the recorder, or the toast-master, or any other of the great officers of the city. They'd nick him.

But these were not the worst of Nicholas Tulrumbles doings. If they had been, he might have remained a mayor to this day, and have talked till he lost his voice. He contracted a relish for statistics, and got philosophical ; and the statistics and the philosophy together, led him into an act which increased his unpopularity and hastened his downfall.

At the very end of the Mudfog High Street, and abutting on the river-side, stands the Jolly Boatmen, an old-fashioned low-roofed, bay-windowed house, with a bar, kitchen, and tap-room all in one, and a large fireplace with a kettle to correspond, round which the working men have congregated time out of mind on a winter's night, refreshed by draughts of good strong beer, and cheered by the sounds of a fiddle and tambourine—the Jolly Boatmen having been duly licensed by the mayor and corporation, to scrape the fiddle and thumb the tambourine from time, whereof the memory of the oldest inhabitants goeth not to the contrary. Now Nicholas Tulrumbles had been reading pamphlets on crime, and parliamentary reports—or had made the secretary read them to him, which is the same thing in effect—and he at once perceived that this fiddle and tambourine must have done more to demoralise Mudfog than any other operating causes that ingenuity could imagine. So he read up for the subject, and determined to come out on the corporation with a burst, the very next time the license was applied for.

The licensing day came, and the red-faced landlord of the Jolly Boatmen walked into the town-hall,

looking as jolly as need be, having actually put on an extra fiddle for that night, to commemorate the anniversary of the Jolly Boatmen's music license. It was applied for in due form, and was just about to be granted as a matter of course, when up rose Nicholas Tulrumbles, and drowned the astonished corporation in a torrent of eloquence. He descanted in glowing terms upon the increasing depravity of his native town of Mudfog, and the excesses committed by its population. Then, he related how shocked he had been to see barrels of beer sliding down into the cellar of the Jolly Boatmen week after week; and how he had sat at a window opposite the Jolly Boatmen for two days together, to count the people who went in for beer between the hours of twelve and one o'clock alone—which, by the bye, was the time at which the great majority of the Mudfog people dined. Then, he went on to state, how the number of people who came out with beer-jugs, averaged twenty-one in five minutes, which, being multiplied by twelve, gave two hundred and fifty-two people with beer-jugs in an hour, and multiplied again by fifteen (the number of hours during which the house was open daily) yielded three thousand seven hundred and eighty people with beer-jugs per day, or twenty-six thousand four hundred and sixty people with beer-jugs, per week. Then he proceeded to show that a tambourine and moral degradation were synonymous terms, and a fiddle and vicious propensities wholly inseparable. All these arguments he strengthened and demonstrated by frequent references to a large book with a blue cover, and sundry quotations from the Middlesex magistrates; and in the end, the corporation, who

were posed with the figures, and sleepy with the speech, and sadly in want of dinner into the bargain, yielded the palm to Nicholas Tulrumbles, and refused the music license to the Jolly Boatmen.

But although Nicholas triumphed, his triumph was short. He carried on the war against beer-jugs and fiddles, forgetting the time when he was glad to drink out of the one, and to dance to the other, till the people hated, and his old friends shunned him. He grew tired of the lonely magnificence of Mudfog Hall, and his heart yearned towards the Lighterman's Arms. He wished he had never set up as a public man, and sighed for the good old times of the coal-shop, and the chimney corner.

At length old Nicholas, being thoroughly miserable, took heart of grace, paid the secretary a quarter's wages in advance, and packed him off to London by the next coach. Having taken this step, he put his hat on his head, and his pride in his pocket, and walked down to the old room at the Lighterman's Arms. There were only two of the old fellows there, and they looked coldly on Nicholas as he proffered his hand.

"Are you going to put down pipes, Mr. Tulrumbles?" said one.

"Or trace the progress of crime to 'bacca?" growled another.

"Neither," replied Nicholas Tulrumbles, shaking hands with them both, whether they would or not. "I've come down to say that I'm very sorry for having made a fool of myself, and that I hope you'll give me up the old chair again."

The old fellows opened their eyes, and three or

four more old fellows opened the door, to whom Nicholas, with tears in his eyes, thrust out his hand too, and told the same story. They raised a shout of joy, that made the bells in the ancient church tower vibrate again, and wheeling the old chair into the warm corner, thrust old Nicholas down into it, and ordered in the very largest-sized bowl of hot punch, with an unlimited number of pipes, directly.

The next day, the Jolly Boatmen got the license, and the next night, old Nicholas and Ned Twigger's wife led off a dance to the music of the fiddle and tambourine, the tone of which seemed mightily improved by a little rest, for they never had played so merrily before. Ned Twigger was in the very height of his glory, and he danced hornpipes, and balanced chairs on his chin, and straws on his nose, till the whole company, including the corporation, were in raptures of admiration at the brilliancy of his acquirements.

Mr. Tulrumbles, junior, couldn't make up his mind to be anything but magnificent, so he went up to London and drew bills on his father; and when he had overdrawn, and got into debt, he grew penitent, and came home again.

As to old Nicholas, he kept his word, and having had six weeks of public life, never tried it any more. He went to sleep in the town-hall at the very next meeting; and, in full proof of his sincerity, has requested us to write this faithful narrative. We wish it could have the effect of reminding the Tulrumbles of another sphere, that puffed-up conceit is not dignity, and that snarling at the little pleasures

they were once glad to enjoy, because they would rather forget the times when they were of lower station, renders them objects of contempt and ridicule.

This is the first time we have published any of our gleanings from this particular source. Perhaps, at some future period, we may venture to open the chronicles of Mudfog.

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF
THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERY-
THING.

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERY- THING.

WE have made the most unparalleled and extraordinary exertions to place before our readers a complete and accurate account of the proceedings at the late grand meeting of the Mudfog Association, holden in the town of Mudfog ; it affords us great happiness to lay the result before them, in the shape of various communications received from our able, talented, and graphic correspondent, expressly sent down for the purpose, who has immortalised us, himself, Mudfog, and the association, all at one and the same time. We have been, indeed, for some days unable to determine who will transmit the greatest name to posterity ; ourselves, who sent our correspondent down ; our correspondent, who wrote an account of the matter ; or the association, who gave our correspondent something to write about. We rather incline to the opinion that we are the greatest man of the party, inasmuch as the notion of an exclusive and authentic report originated with us : this may be prejudice ; it may arise from a prepossession on our part in our own favour. Be it so. We have no doubt that every gentleman concerned in this mighty assemblage is troubled with the same complaint in a greater or less degree ; and it is a consolation to us to know that

we have at least this feeling in common with the great scientific stars, the brilliant and extraordinary luminaries, whose speculations we record.

We give our correspondent's letters in the order in which they reached us. Any attempt at amalgamating them into one beautiful whole, would only destroy that glowing tone, that dash of wildness, and rich vein of picturesque interest, which pervade them throughout.

"Mudfog, Monday night, seven o'clock.

"WE are in a state of great excitement here. Nothing is spoken of but the approaching meeting of the association. The inn-doors are thronged with waiters anxiously looking for the expected arrivals; and the numerous bills which are wafered up in the windows of private houses, intimating that there are beds to let within, give the streets a very animated and cheerful appearance, the wafers being of a great variety of colours, and the monotony of printed inscriptions being relieved by every possible size and style of handwriting. It is confidently rumoured that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy have engaged three beds and a sitting-room at the Pig and Tinder-box. I give you the rumour as it has reached me; but I cannot, as yet, vouch for its accuracy. The moment I have been enabled to obtain any certain information upon this interesting point, you may depend upon receiving it."

"Half-past seven.

"I HAVE just returned from a personal interview with the landlord of the Pig and Tinder-box. He

speaks confidently of the probability of Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy taking up their residence at his house during the sitting of the association, but denies that the beds have been yet engaged ; in which representation he is confirmed by the chambermaid—a girl of artless manners and interesting appearance. The boots denies that it is at all likely that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will put up here ; but I have reason to believe that this man has been suborned by the proprietor of the Original Pig, which is the opposition hotel. Amidst such conflicting testimony it is difficult to arrive at the real truth ; but you may depend upon receiving authentic information upon this point the moment the fact is ascertained. The excitement still continues. A boy fell through the window of the pastry-cook's shop at the corner of the High Street about half an hour ago, which has occasioned much confusion. The general impression is that it was an accident. Pray heaven it may prove so ! ”

“Tuesday, noon.

“ AT an early hour this morning the bells of all the churches struck seven o'clock ; the effect of which, in the present lively state of the town, was extremely singular. While I was at breakfast, a yellow gig, drawn by a dark gray horse, with a patch of white over his right eyelid, proceeded at a rapid pace in the direction of the Original Pig stables ; it is currently reported that this gentleman has arrived here for the purpose of attending the association, and, from what I have heard, I consider it extremely probable, although nothing decisive is yet known regarding

him. You may conceive the anxiety with which we are all looking forward to the arrival of the four o'clock coach this afternoon.

"Notwithstanding the excited state of the populace, no outrage has yet been committed, owing to the admirable discipline and discretion of the police, who are nowhere to be seen. A barrel-organ is playing opposite my window, and groups of people, offering fish and vegetables for sale, parade the streets. With these exceptions everything is quiet, and I trust will continue so."

"Five o'clock."

"It is now ascertained, beyond all doubt, that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will *not* repair to the Pig and Tinder-box, but have actually engaged apartments at the Original Pig. This intelligence is *exclusive*; and I leave you and your readers to draw their own inferences from it. Why Professor Wheezy, of all people in the world, should repair to the Original Pig in preference to the Pig and Tinderbox, it is not easy to conceive. The professor is a man who should be above all such petty feelings. Some people here openly impute treachery, and a distinct breach of faith to Professors Snore and Doze; while others, again, are disposed to acquit them of any culpability in the transaction, and to insinuate that the blame rests solely with Professor Wheezy. I own that I incline to the latter opinion; and although it gives me great pain to speak in terms of censure or disapprobation of a man of such transcendent genius and acquirements, still I am

bound to say that, if my suspicions be well founded, and if all the reports which have reached my ears be true, I really do not well know what to make of the matter.

“Mr. Slug, so celebrated for his statistical researches, arrived this afternoon by the four o’clock stage. His complexion is a dark purple, and he has a habit of sighing constantly. He looked extremely well, and appeared in high health and spirits. Mr. Woodensconce also came down in the same conveyance. The distinguished gentleman was fast asleep on his arrival, and I am informed by the guard that he had been so the whole way. He was, no doubt, preparing for his approaching fatigues; but what gigantic visions must those be that flit through the brain of such a man when his body is in a state of torpidity!

“The influx of visitors increases every moment. I am told (I know not how truly) that two post-chaises have arrived at the Original Pig within the last half-hour, and I myself observed a wheelbarrow, containing three carpet bags and a bundle, entering the yard of the Pig and Tinder-box no longer ago than five minutes since. The people are still quietly pursuing their ordinary occupations; but there is a wildness in their eyes, and an unwonted rigidity in the muscles of their countenances, which shows to the observant spectator that their expectations are strained to the very utmost pitch. I fear, unless some very extraordinary arrivals take place to-night, that consequences may arise from this popular ferment, which every man of sense and feeling would deplore.”

"Twenty minutes past six."

"I HAVE just heard that the boy who fell through the pastry-cook's window last night has died of the fright. He was suddenly called upon to pay three and sixpence for the damage done, and his constitution, it seems, was not strong enough to bear up against the shock. The inquest, it is said, will be held to-morrow."

"Three-quarters past seven."

"PROFESSORS MUFF and Nogo have just driven up to the hotel door; they at once ordered dinner with great condescension. We are all very much delighted with the urbanity of their manners, and the ease with which they adapt themselves to the forms and ceremonies of ordinary life. Immediately on their arrival they sent for the head waiter, and privately requested him to purchase a live dog—as cheap a one as he could meet with—and to send him up after dinner, with a pie-board, a knife and fork, and a clean plate. It is conjectured that some experiments will be tried upon the dog to-night; if any particulars should transpire, I will forward them by express."

"Half-past eight."

"THE animal has been procured. He is a pug-dog, of rather intelligent appearance, in good condition, and with very short legs. He has been tied to a curtain-peg in a dark room, and is howling dreadfully."

"Ten minutes to nine."

"THE dog has just been rung for. With an instinct which would appear almost the result of

reason, the sagacious animal seized the waiter by the calf of the leg when he approached to take him, and made a desperate, though ineffectual resistance. I have not been able to procure admission to the apartment occupied by the scientific gentlemen; but, judging from the sounds which reached my ears when I stood upon the landing-place outside the door, just now, I should be disposed to say that the dog had retreated growling beneath some article of furniture, and was keeping the professors at bay. This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of the ostler, who, after peeping through the keyhole, assures me that he distinctly saw Professor Nogo on his knees, holding forth a small bottle of prussic acid, to which the animal, who was crouched beneath an arm-chair, obstinately declined to smell. You cannot imagine the feverish state of irritation we are in, lest the interests of science should be sacrificed to the prejudices of a brute creature, who is not endowed with sufficient sense to foresee the incalculable benefits which the whole human race may derive from so very slight a concession on his part."

— "*Nine o'clock.*

"THE dog's tail and ears have been sent downstairs to be washed; from which circumstance we infer that the animal is no more. His forelegs have been delivered to the boots to be brushed, which strengthens the supposition."

— "*Half after ten.*

"MY feelings are so overpowered by what has taken place in the course of the last hour and a half,

that I have scarcely strength to detail the rapid succession of events which have quite bewildered all those who are cognisant of their occurrence. It appears that the pug-dog mentioned in my last was surreptitiously obtained—stolen, in fact—by some person attached to the stable department, from an unmarried lady resident in this town. Frantic on discovering the loss of her favourite, the lady rushed distractedly into the street, calling in the most heart-rending and pathetic manner upon the passengers to restore her, her Augustus—for so the deceased was named, in affectionate remembrance of a former lover of his mistress, to whom he bore a striking personal resemblance, which renders the circumstances additionally affecting. I am not yet in a condition to inform you what circumstance induced the bereaved lady to direct her steps to the hotel which had witnessed the last struggles of her *protégé*. I can only state that she arrived there, at the very instant when his detached members were passing through the passage on a small tray. Her shrieks still reverberate in my ears! I grieve to say that the expressive features of Professor Muff were much scratched and lacerated by the injured lady; and that Professor Nogo, besides sustaining several severe bites, has lost some handfuls of hair from the same cause. It must be some consolation to these gentlemen to know that their ardent attachment to scientific pursuits has alone occasioned these unpleasant consequences; for which the sympathy of a grateful country will sufficiently reward them. The unfortunate lady remains at the Pig and Tinder-box, and up to this time is reported in a very precarious state.

"I need scarcely tell you that this unlooked-for catastrophe has cast a damp and gloom upon us in the midst of our exhilaration ; natural in any case, but greatly enhanced in this, by the amiable qualities of the deceased animal, who appears to have been much and deservedly respected by the whole of his acquaintance."

" Twelve o'clock.

"I TAKE the last opportunity before sealing my parcel to inform you that the boy who fell through the pastry-cook's window is not dead, as was universally believed, but alive and well. The report appears to have had its origin in his mysterious disappearance. He was found half an hour since on the premises of a sweet-stuff maker, where a raffle had been announced for a second-hand sealskin cap and a tambourine ; and where—a sufficient number of members not having been obtained at first—he had patiently waited until the list was completed. This fortunate discovery has in some degree restored our gaiety and cheerfulness. It is proposed to get up a subscription for him without delay.

"Everybody is nervously anxious to see what to-morrow will bring forth. If any one should arrive in the course of the night, I have left strict directions to be called immediately. I should have sat up, indeed, but the agitating events of this day have been too much for me.

"No news yet of either of the Professors Snore, Doze, or Wheezy. It is very strange !"

" Wednesday afternoon.

"ALL is now over ; and, upon one point at least,

I am at length enabled to set the minds of your readers at rest. The three professors arrived at ten minutes after two o'clock, and, instead of taking up their quarters at the Original Pig, as it was universally understood in the course of yesterday that they would assuredly have done, drove straight to the Pig and Tinder-box, where they threw off the mask at once, and openly announced their intention of remaining. Professor Wheezy *may* reconcile this very extraordinary conduct with *his* notions of fair and equitable dealing, but I would recommend Professor Wheezy to be cautious how he presumes too far upon his well-earned reputation. How such a man as Professor Snore, or, which is still more extraordinary, such an individual as Professor Doze, can quietly allow himself to be mixed up with such proceedings as these, you will naturally inquire. Upon this head, rumour is silent; I have my speculations, but forbear to give utterance to them just now."

"Four o'clock.

"THE town is filling fast; eighteenpence has been offered for a bed and refused. Several gentlemen were under the necessity last night of sleeping in the brick fields, and on the steps of doors, for which they were taken before the magistrates in a body this morning, and committed to prison as vagrants for various terms. One of these persons I understand to be a highly-respectable tinker, of great practical skill, who had forwarded a paper to the President of Section D., Mechanical Science, on the construction of pipkins with copper bottoms and safety-valves, of

which report speaks highly. The incarceration of this gentleman is greatly to be regretted, as his absence will preclude any discussion on the subject.

"The bills are being taken down in all directions, and lodgings are being secured on almost any terms. I have heard of fifteen shillings a week for two rooms, exclusive of coals and attendance, but I can scarcely believe it. The excitement is dreadful. I was informed this morning that the civil authorities, apprehensive of some outbreak of popular feeling, had commanded a recruiting sergeant and two corporals to be under arms; and that, with the view of not irritating the people unnecessarily by their presence, they had been requested to take up their position before daybreak in a turnpike, distant about a quarter of a mile from the town. The vigour and promptness of these measures cannot be too highly extolled.

"Intelligence has just been brought me, that an elderly female, in a state of inebriety, has declared in the open street her intention to 'do' for Mr. Slug. Some statistical returns compiled by that gentleman, relative to the consumption of raw spirituous liquors in this place, are supposed to be the cause of the wretch's animosity. It is added that this declaration was loudly cheered by a crowd of persons who had assembled on the spot; and that one man had the boldness to designate Mr. Slug aloud by the opprobrious epithet of 'Stick-in-the-mud!' It is earnestly to be hoped that now, when the moment has arrived for their interference, the magistrates will not shrink from the exercise of that power which is vested in them by the constitution of our common country."

"Half-past ten.

"The disturbance, I am happy to inform you, has been completely quelled, and the ringleader taken into custody. She had a pail of cold water thrown over her, previous to being locked up, and expresses great contrition and uneasiness. We are all in a fever of anticipation about to-morrow; but, now that we are within a few hours of the meeting of the association, and at last enjoy the proud consciousness of having its illustrious members amongst us, I trust and hope everything may go off peaceably. I shall send you a full report of to-morrow's proceedings by the night coach."

"Eleven o'clock.

"I OPEN my letter to say that nothing whatever has occurred since I folded it up."

"Thursday.

"THE sun rose this morning at the usual hour. I did not observe anything particular in the aspect of the glorious planet, except that he appeared to me (it might have been a delusion of my heightened fancy) to shine with more than common brilliancy, and to shed a refulgent lustre upon the town, such as I had never observed before. This is the more extraordinary, as the sky was perfectly cloudless, and the atmosphere peculiarly fine. At half-past nine o'clock the general committee assembled, with the last year's president in the chair. The report of the council was read; and one passage, which stated that the council had corresponded with no less than three thousand five hundred and seventy-one persons (all of whom paid

their own postage), on no fewer than seven thousand two hundred and forty-three topics, was received with a degree of enthusiasm which no efforts could suppress. The various committees and sections having been appointed, and the more formal business transacted, the great proceedings of the meeting commenced at eleven o'clock precisely. I had the happiness of occupying a most eligible position at that time, in

“SECTION A.—ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY.

“GREAT ROOM, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

“*President*—Professor Snore. *Vice-Presidents*—Professors

“Doze and Wheezy.

“The scene at this moment was particularly striking. The sun streamed through the windows of the apartments, and tinted the whole scene with its brilliant rays, bringing out in strong relief the noble visages of the professors and scientific gentlemen, who, some with bald heads, some with red heads, some with brown heads, some with gray heads, some with black heads, some with block heads, presented a *coup d'œil* which no eye-witness will readily forget. In front of these gentlemen were papers and ink-stands; and round the room, on elevated benches extending as far as the forms could reach, were assembled a brilliant concourse of those lovely and elegant women for which Mudfog is justly acknowledged to be without a rival in the whole world. The contrast between their fair faces and the dark coats and trousers of the scientific gentlemen I shall never cease to remember while Memory holds her seat.

“Time having been allowed for a slight confusion, occasioned by the falling down of the greater part of the platforms, to subside, the president called on one of the secretaries to read a communication entitled, ‘Some remarks on the industrious fleas, with considerations on the importance of establishing infant-schools among that numerous class of society; of directing their industry to useful and practical ends; and of applying the surplus fruits thereof, towards providing for them a comfortable and respectable maintenance in their old age.’

“THE AUTHOR stated that, having long turned his attention to the moral and social condition of these interesting animals, he had been induced to visit an exhibition in Regent Street, London, commonly known by the designation of ‘The Industrious Fleas.’ He had there seen many fleas, occupied certainly in various pursuits and avocations, but occupied, he was bound to add, in a manner which no man of well-regulated mind could fail to regard with sorrow and regret. One flea, reduced to the level of a beast of burden, was drawing about a miniature gig, containing a particularly small effigy of his Grace the Duke of Wellington; while another was staggering beneath the weight of a golden model of his great adversary Napoleon Bonaparte. Some, brought up as mountebanks and ballet-dancers, were performing a figure-dance (he regretted to observe that, of the fleas so employed, several were females); others were in training, in a small card-board box, for pedestrians—mere sporting characters—and two were actually engaged in the cold-blooded and barbarous occupation of duelling; a pursuit from

which humanity recoiled with horror and disgust. He suggested that measures should be immediately taken to employ the labour of these fleas as part and parcel of the productive power of the country, which might easily be done by the establishment among them of infant-schools and houses of industry, in which a system of virtuous education, based upon sound principles, should be observed, and moral precepts strictly inculcated. He proposed that every flea who presumed to exhibit, for hire, music, or dancing, or any species of theatrical entertainment, without a license, should be considered a vagabond, and treated accordingly; in which respect he only placed him upon a level with the rest of mankind. He would further suggest that their labour should be placed under the control and regulation of the state, who should set apart from the profits, a fund for the support of superannuated or disabled fleas, their widows and orphans. With this view, he proposed that liberal premiums should be offered for the three best designs for a general almshouse; from which—as insect architecture was well known to be in a very advanced and perfect state—we might possibly derive many valuable hints for the improvement of our metropolitan universities, national galleries, and other public edifices.

“THE PRESIDENT wished to be informed how the ingenious gentleman proposed to open a communication with fleas generally, in the first instance, so that they might be thoroughly imbued with a sense of the advantages they must necessarily derive from changing their mode of life, and applying themselves to honest labour. This appeared to him, the only difficulty.

“THE AUTHOR submitted that this difficulty was easily overcome, or rather that there was no difficulty at all in the case. Obviously the course to be pursued, if her Majesty’s government could be prevailed upon to take up the plan, would be, to secure at a remunerative salary the individual to whom he had alluded as presiding over the exhibition in Regent Street at the period of his visit. That gentleman would at once be able to put himself in communication with the mass of the fleas, and to instruct them in pursuance of some general plan of education, to be sanctioned by Parliament, until such time as the more intelligent among them were advanced enough to officiate as teachers to the rest.

“The President and several members of the section highly complimented the author of the paper last read on his most ingenious and important treatise. It was determined that the subject should be recommended to the immediate consideration of the council.

“MR. WIGSBY produced a cauliflower somewhat larger than a chaise-umbrella, which had been raised by no other artificial means than the simple application of highly carbonated soda-water as manure. He explained that by scooping out the head, which would afford a new and delicious species of nourishment for the poor, a parachute, in principle something similar to that constructed by M. Garnerin, was at once obtained; the stalk of course being kept downwards. He added that he was perfectly willing to make a descent from a height of not less than three miles and a quarter; and had in fact already proposed the same to the proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens, who in the handsomest manner at once

consented to his wishes, and appointed an early day next summer for the undertaking ; merely stipulating that the rim of the cauliflower should be previously broken in three or four places to ensure the safety of the descent.

"THE PRESIDENT congratulated the public on the *grand gala* in store for them, and warmly eulogised the proprietors of the establishment alluded to, for their love of science, and regard for the safety of human life, both of which did them the highest honour.

"A member wished to know how many thousand additional lamps the royal property would be illuminated with, on the night after the descent.

"MR. WIGSBY replied that the point was not yet finally decided ; but he believed it was proposed, over and above the ordinary illuminations, to exhibit in various devices eight millions and a half of additional lamps.

"The member expressed himself much gratified with this announcement.

"MR. BLUNDERUM delighted the section with a most interesting and valuable paper 'on the last moments of the learned pig,' which produced a very strong impression on the assembly, the account being compiled from the personal recollections of his favourite attendant. The account stated in the most emphatic terms that the animal's name was not Toby, but Solomon ; and distinctly proved that he could have no near relatives in the profession, as many designing persons had falsely stated, inasmuch as his father, mother, brothers and sisters, had all fallen victims to the butcher at different times. An uncle of his indeed, had, with very great labour been

traced to a sty in Somers Town ; but as he was in a very infirm state at the time, being afflicted with measles, and shortly afterwards disappeared, there appeared too much reason to conjecture that he had been converted into sausages. The disorder of the learned pig was originally a severe cold, which, being aggravated by excessive trough indulgence, finally settled upon the lungs, and terminated in a general decay of the constitution. A melancholy instance of a presentiment entertained by the animal of his approaching dissolution was recorded. After gratifying a numerous and fashionable company with his performances, in which no falling off whatever was visible, he fixed his eyes on the biographer, and, turning to the watch which lay on the floor, and on which he was accustomed to point out the hour, deliberately passed his snout twice round the dial. In precisely four-and-twenty hours from that time he had ceased to exist !

“PROFESSOR WHEEZY inquired whether, previous to his demise, the animal had expressed, by signs or otherwise, any wishes regarding the disposal of his little property.

“MR. BLUNDERUM replied that, when the biographer took up the pack of cards at the conclusion of the performance, the animal grunted several times in a significant manner, and nodding his head as he was accustomed to do, when gratified. From these gestures it was understood that he wished the attendant to keep the cards, which he had ever since done. He had not expressed any wish relative to his watch, which had accordingly been pawned by the same individual.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know whether any member of the section had ever seen or conversed with the pig-faced lady, who was reported to have worn a black velvet mask, and to have taken her meals from a golden trough.

"After some hesitation a member replied that the pig-faced lady was his mother-in-law, and that he trusted the President would not violate the sanctity of private life.

"THE PRESIDENT begged pardon. He had considered the pig-faced lady a public character. Would the honourable member object to state, with a view to the advancement of science, whether she was in any way connected with the learned pig?

"The member replied in the same low tone that, as the question appeared to involve a suspicion that the learned pig might be his half-brother, he must decline answering it.

"SECTION B.—ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.

"COACH-HOUSE, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

"*President*—Dr. Toorell. *Vice-Presidents*—Professors Muñ

"and Nogo.

"DR. KUTANKUMAGEN (of Moscow) read to the section a report of a case which had occurred within his own practice, strikingly illustrative of the power of medicine, as exemplified in his successful treatment of a virulent disorder. He had been called in to visit the patient on the 1st of April 1837. He was then labouring under symptoms peculiarly alarming to any medical man. His frame was stout and muscular, his step firm and elastic, his cheeks plump and red, his

voice loud, his appetite good, his pulse full and round. He was in the constant habit of eating three meals *per diem*, and of drinking at least one bottle of wine, and one glass of spirituous liquors diluted with water, in the course of the four-and-twenty hours. He laughed constantly, and in so hearty a manner that it was terrible to hear him. By dint of powerful medicine, low diet, and bleeding, the symptoms in the course of three days perceptibly decreased. A rigid perseverance in the same course of treatment for only one week, accompanied with small doses of water-gruel, weak broth, and barley-water, led to their entire disappearance. In the course of a month he was sufficiently recovered to be carried downstairs by two nurses, and to enjoy an airing in a close carriage, supported by soft pillows. At the present moment he was restored so far as to walk about, with the slight assistance of a crutch and a boy. It would perhaps be gratifying to the section to learn that he ate little, drank little, slept little, and was never heard to laugh by any accident whatever.

“DR. W. R. FEE, in complimenting the honourable member upon the triumphant cure he had effected, begged to ask whether the patient still bled freely?

“DR. KUTANKUMAGEN replied in the affirmative.

“DR. W. R. FEE.—And you found that he bled freely during the whole course of the disorder?

“DR. KUTANKUMAGEN.—Oh, dear, yes; most freely.

“DR. NEESHAWTS supposed that if the patient had not submitted to be bled with great readiness and perseverance, so extraordinary a cure could never, in fact, have been accomplished. Dr. Kutankumagen rejoined, certainly not.

"MR. KNIGHT BELL (M.R.C.S.) exhibited a wax preparation of the interior of a gentleman who in early life had inadvertently swallowed a door-key. It was a curious fact that a medical student of dissipated habits, being present at the *post mortem* examination, found means to escape unobserved from the room, with that portion of the coats of the stomach upon which an exact model of the instrument was distinctly impressed, with which he hastened to a locksmith of doubtful character, who made a new key from the pattern so shown to him. With this key the medical student entered the house of the deceased gentleman, and committed a burglary to a large amount, for which he was subsequently tried and executed.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know what became of the original key after the lapse of years. Mr. Knight Bell replied that the gentleman was always much accustomed to punch, and it was supposed the acid had gradually devoured it.

"DR. NEESHAWTS and several of the members were of opinion that the key must have lain very cold and heavy upon the gentleman's stomach.

"MR. KNIGHT BELL believed it did at first. It was worthy of remark, perhaps, that for some years the gentleman was troubled with a nightmare, under the influence of which he always imagined himself a wine-cellar door.

"PROFESSOR MUFF related a very extraordinary and convincing proof of the wonderful efficacy of the system of infinitesimal doses, which the section were doubtless aware was based upon the theory that the very minutest amount of any given drug, properly

dispersed through the human frame, would be productive of precisely the same result as a very large dose administered in the usual manner. Thus, the fortieth part of a grain of calomel was supposed to be equal to a five-grain calomel pill, and so on in proportion throughout the whole range of medicine. He had tried the experiment in a curious manner upon a publican who had been brought into the hospital with a broken head, and was cured upon the infinitesimal system in the incredibly short space of three months. This man was a hard drinker. He (Professor Muff) had dispersed three drops of rum through a bucket of water, and requested the man to drink the whole. What was the result? Before he had drunk a quart, he was in a state of beastly intoxication; and five other men were made dead drunk with the remainder.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know whether an infinitesimal dose of soda-water would have recovered them? Professor Muff replied that the twenty-fifth part of a teaspoonful, properly administered to each patient, would have sobered him immediately. The President remarked that this was a most important discovery, and he hoped the lord mayor and Court of Aldermen would patronise it immediately.

"A member begged to be informed whether it would be possible to administer—say, the twentieth part of a grain of bread and cheese to all grown-up paupers, and the fortieth part to children, with the same satisfying effect as their present allowance.

"PROFESSOR MUFF was willing to stake his professional reputation on the perfect adequacy of such a quantity of food to the support of human life—in

workhouses; the addition of the fifteenth part of a grain of pudding twice a week would render it a high diet.

"PROFESSOR NOGO called the attention of the section to a very extraordinary case of animal magnetism. A private watchman, being merely looked at by the operator from the opposite side of a wide street, was at once observed to be in a very drowsy and languid state. He was followed to his box, and being once slightly rubbed on the palms of the hands, fell into a sound sleep, in which he continued without intermission for ten hours.

"SECTION C.—STATISTICS.

"HAY-LOFT, ORIGINAL PIG.

"*President*—Mr. Woodensconce. *Vice-Presidents*—Mr. Ledbrain
"and Mr. Timbered.

"MR. SLUG stated to the section the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labour, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of children's books principally in circulation:—

'Jack the Giant-killer'	7,943
'Ditto and Bean-stalk'	8,621
'Ditto and Eleven Brothers'	2,845
'Ditto and Jill'	1,998
Total	<hr/> 1,2407

"He found that the proportion of 'Robinson Crusoes' to 'Philip Quarlls' was as four and a half

to one; and that the preponderance of 'Valentine and Orsons' over 'Goody Two Shoeses' was as three and an eighth of the former to half a one of the latter; a comparison of 'Seven Champions' with 'Simple Simons' gave the same result. The ignorance that prevailed was lamentable. One child, on being asked whether he would rather be Saint George of England or a respectable tallow-chandler, instantly replied, 'Taint George of Ingling.' Another, a little boy of eight years old, was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons, and openly stated that it was his intention when he grew up, to rush forth sword in hand for the deliverance of captive princesses, and the promiscuous slaughter of giants. Not one child among the number interrogated had ever heard of Mungo Park—some inquiring whether he was at all connected with the black man that swept the crossing; and others whether he was in any way related to the Regent's Park. They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sinbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

"A member strongly deprecating the use of all the other books mentioned, suggested that 'Jack and Jill' might perhaps be exempted from the general censure, inasmuch as the hero and heroine, in the very outset of the tale, were depicted as going *up* a hill to fetch a pail of water, which was a laborious and useful occupation—supposing the family linen was being washed, for instance.

"MR. SLUG feared that the moral effect of this passage was more than counterbalanced by another

in a subsequent part of the poem, in which very gross allusion was made to the mode in which the heroine was personally chastised by her mother

“ ‘ For laughing at Jack’s disaster ’ ;

besides, the whole work had this one great fault, *it was not true.*

“ THE PRESIDENT complimented the honourable member on the excellent distinction he had drawn. Several other members, too, dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures ; which process the President very forcibly remarked, had made them (the section) the men they were.

“ MR. SLUG then stated some curious calculations respecting the dogs’-meat barrows of London. He found that the total number of small carts and barrows engaged in dispensing provision to the cats and dogs of the metropolis was one thousand seven hundred and forty-three. The average number of skewers delivered daily with the provender, by each dogs’-meat cart or barrow, was thirty-six. Now, multiplying the number of skewers so delivered by the number of barrows, a total of sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers daily would be obtained. Allowing that, of these sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers, the odd two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight were accidentally devoured with the meat, by the most voracious of the animals supplied, it followed that sixty thousand skewers per day, or the enormous number of twenty-one millions nine hundred thousand skewers annually, were wasted in the kennels and

dustholes of London; which, if collected and warehoused, would in ten years' time afford a mass of timber more than sufficient for the construction of a first-rate vessel of war for the use of her Majesty's navy, to be called *The Royal Skewer*, and to become under that name the terror of all the enemies of this island.

"MR. X. LEDBRAIN read a very ingenious communication, from which it appeared that the total number of legs belonging to the manufacturing population of one great town in Yorkshire was, in round numbers, forty thousand, while the total number of chair and stool legs in their houses was only thirty thousand, which, upon the very favourable average of three legs to a seat, yielded only ten thousand seats in all. From this calculation it would appear—not taking wooden or cork legs into the account, but allowing two legs to every person—that ten thousand individuals (one half of the whole population) were either destitute of any rest for their legs at all, or passed the whole of their leisure time in sitting upon boxes.

"SECTION D.—MECHANICAL SCIENCE.

"COACH-HOUSE, ORIGINAL FIG.

"President—Mr. Carter. Vice-Presidents—Mr. Truck and

"Mr. Waghorn.

"PROFESSOR QUEERSPECK exhibited an elegant model of a portable railway, neatly mounted in a green case, for the waistcoat pocket. By attaching this beautiful instrument to his boots, any bank or public-office clerk could transport himself from his

place of residence to his place of business, at the easy rate of sixty-five miles an hour, which, to gentlemen of sedentary pursuits, would be an incalculable advantage.

"THE PRESIDENT was desirous of knowing whether it was necessary to have a level surface on which the gentleman was to run

"PROFESSOR QUEERSPECK explained that city gentlemen would run in trains, being handcuffed together to prevent confusion or unpleasantness. For instance, trains would start every morning at eight, nine, and ten o'clock, from Camden Town, Islington, Camberwell, Hackney, and various other places in which city gentlemen are accustomed to reside. It would be necessary to have a level, but he had provided for this difficulty by proposing that the best line that the circumstances would admit of, should be taken through the sewers which undermine the streets of the metropolis, and which, well lighted by jets from the gas-pipes which run immediately above them, would form a pleasant and commodious arcade, especially in winter-time, when the inconvenient custom of carrying umbrellas, now so general, could be wholly dispensed with. In reply to another question Professor Queerspeck stated that no substitute for the purposes to which these arcades were at present devoted had yet occurred to him, but that he hoped no fanciful objection on this head would be allowed to interfere with so great an undertaking.

MR. JOBBA produced a forcing-machine on a novel plan for bringing joint-stock railway shares prematurely to a premium. The instrument was in the form of an elegant gilt weather-glass, of most

dazzling appearance, and was worked behind, by strings, after the manner of a pantomime trick, the strings being always pulled by the directors of the company to which the machine belonged. The quicksilver was so ingeniously placed that, when the acting directors held shares in their pockets, figures denoting very small expenses and very large returns appeared upon the glass; but the moment the directors parted with these pieces of paper, the estimate of needful expenditure suddenly increased itself to an immense extent, while the statements of certain profits became reduced in the same proportion. Mr. Jobba stated that the machine had been in constant requisition for some months past, and he had never once known it to fail.

"A member expressed his opinion that it was extremely neat and pretty. He wished to know whether it was not liable to accidental derangement? Mr. Jobba said that the whole machine was undoubtedly liable to be blown up, but that was the only objection to it.

"PROFESSOR NOGO arrived from the anatomical section to exhibit a model of a safety fire-escape, which could be fixed at any time, in less than half an hour, and by means of which, the youngest or most infirm persons (successfully resisting the progress of the flames until it was quite ready) could be preserved if they merely balanced themselves for a few minutes on the sill of their bedroom window, and got into the escape without falling into the street. The professor stated that the number of boys who had been rescued in the daytime by this machine, from houses which were not on fire, was almost incredible.

Not a conflagration had occurred in the whole of London for many months past to which the escape had not been carried on the very next day, and put in action before a concourse of persons.

“THE PRESIDENT inquired whether there was not some difficulty in ascertaining which was the top of the machine, and which the bottom, in cases of pressing emergency.

“PROFESSOR NOGO explained that of course it could not be expected to act quite as well when there was a fire, as when there was not a fire; but in the former case he thought it would be of equal service whether the top were up or down.”

With the last section our correspondent concludes his most able and faithful Report, which will never cease to reflect credit upon him for his scientific attainments, and upon us for our enterprising spirit. It is needless to take a review of the subjects which have been discussed; of the mode in which they have been examined; of the great truths which they have elicited. They are now before the world, and we leave them to read, to consider, and to profit.

The place of meeting for next year has undergone discussion, and has at length been decided, regard being had to, and evidence being taken upon, the goodness of its wines, the supply of its markets, the hospitality of its inhabitants, and the quality of its hotels. We hope at this next meeting our correspondent may again be present, and that we may be once more the means of placing his communications before the world. Until that period we have been prevailed upon to allow this number of our Miscellany to be

retailed to the public, or wholesaled to the trade, without any advance upon our usual price.

We have only to add, that the committees are now broken up, and that Mudfog is once again restored to its accustomed tranquillity—that professors and members have had balls, and soirées, and suppers, and great mutual complimentations, and have at length dispersed to their several homes—whither all good wishes and joys attend them, until next year!

(Signed)

Boz.

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF
THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERY-
THING.

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERY- THING.

IN October last, we did ourselves the immortal credit of recording, at an enormous expense, and by dint of exertions unparalleled in the history of periodical publication, the proceedings of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything, which in that month held its first great half-yearly meeting, to the wonder and delight of the whole empire. We announced at the conclusion of that extraordinary and most remarkable report, that when the second meeting of the society should take place, we should be found again at our post, renewing our gigantic and spirited endeavours, and once more making the world ring with the accuracy, authenticity, immeasurable superiority, and intense remarkability of our account of its proceedings. In redemption of this pledge, we caused to be despatched per steam to Oldcastle (at which place this second meeting of the society was held on the 20th instant), the same super-humanly-endowed gentleman who furnished the former report, and who—gifted by Nature with transcendent abilities, and furnished by us with a body of assistants scarcely inferior to himself—has forwarded a series of letters, which, for faithfulness of description, power of language, fervour of thought, happiness of expression, and importance of subject-matter, have no

equal in the epistolary literature of any age or country. We give this gentleman's correspondence entire, and in the order in which it reached our office.

"Saloon of Steamer, Thursday night, half-past eight."

"WHEN I left New Burlington Street this evening in the hackney cabriolet, number four thousand two hundred and eighty-five, I experienced sensations as novel as they were oppressive. A sense of the importance of the task I had undertaken, a consciousness that I was leaving London, and, stranger still, going somewhere else, a feeling of loneliness and a sensation of jolting, quite bewildered my thoughts, and for a time rendered me even insensible to the presence of my carpet-bag and hat-box. I shall ever feel grateful to the driver of a Blackwall omnibus who, by thrusting the pole of his vehicle through the small door of the cabriolet, awakened me from a tumult of imaginings that are wholly indescribable. But of such materials is our imperfect nature composed !

"I am happy to say that I am the first passenger on board, and shall thus be enabled to give you an account of all that happens in the order of its occurrence. The chimney is smoking a good deal, and so are the crew ; and the captain, I am informed, is very drunk in a little house upon deck, something like a black turnpike. I should infer from all I hear that he has got the steam up.

"You will readily guess with what feelings I have just made the discovery that my berth is in the same closet with those engaged by Professor Wooden-sconce, Mr. Slug, and Professor Grime. Professor

Woodensconce has taken the shelf above me, and Mr. Slug and Professor Grime the two shelves opposite. Their luggage has already arrived. On Mr. Slug's bed is a long tin tube of about three inches in diameter, carefully closed at both ends. What can this contain? Some powerful instrument of a new construction, doubtless."

"Ten minutes past nine.

"NOBODY has yet arrived, nor has anything fresh come in my way except several joints of beef and mutton, from which I conclude that a good plain dinner has been provided for to-morrow. There is a singular smell below, which gave me some uneasiness at first; but as the steward says it is always there, and never goes away, I am quite comfortable again. I learn from this man that the different sections will be distributed at the Black Boy and Stomach-ache, and the Boot-jack and Countenance. If this intelligence be true (and I have no reason to doubt it), your readers will draw such conclusions as their different opinions may suggest.

"I write down these remarks as they occur to me, or as the facts come to my knowledge, in order that my first impressions may lose nothing of their original vividness. I shall dispatch them in small packets as opportunities arise."

"Half-past nine.

"SOME dark object has just appeared upon the wharf. I think it is a travelling carriage."

"A quarter to ten.

"No, it isn't."

"Half-past ten.

"THE passengers are pouring in every instant. Four omnibuses full have just arrived upon the wharf, and all is bustle and activity. The noise and confusion are very great. Cloths are laid in the cabins, and the steward is placing blue plates full of knobs of cheese at equal distances down the centre of the tables. He drops a great many knobs; but, being used to it, picks them up again with great dexterity, and, after wiping them on his sleeve, throws them back into the plates. He is a young man of exceedingly prepossessing appearance—either dirty or a mulatto, but I think the former.

"An interesting old gentleman, who came to the wharf in an omnibus, has just quarrelled violently with the porters, and is staggering towards the vessel with a large trunk in his arms. I trust and hope that he may reach it in safety; but the board he has to cross is narrow and slippery. Was that a splash? Gracious powers!

"I have just returned from the deck. The trunk is standing upon the extreme brink of the wharf, but the old gentleman is nowhere to be seen. The watchman is not sure whether he went down or not, but promises to drag for him the first thing to-morrow morning. May his humane efforts prove successful!

"Professor Nogo has this moment arrived with his nightcap on under his hat. He has ordered a glass of cold brandy and water, with a hard biscuit, and a basin, and has gone straight to bed. What can this mean?

"The three other scientific gentlemen to whom I

have already alluded have come on board, and have all tried their beds, with the exception of Professor Woodensconce, who sleeps in one of the top ones, and can't get into it. Mr. Slug, who sleeps in the other top one, is unable to get out of his, and is to have his supper handed up by a boy. I have had the honour to introduce myself to these gentlemen, and we have amicably arranged the order in which we shall retire to rest; which it is necessary to agree upon, because, although the cabin is very comfortable, there is not room for more than one gentleman to be out of bed at a time, and even he must take his boots off in the passage.

"As I anticipated, the knobs of cheese were provided for the passengers' supper, and are now in course of consumption. Your readers will be surprised to hear that Professor Woodensconce has abstained from cheese for eight years, although he takes butter in considerable quantities. Professor Grime, having lost several teeth, is unable, I observe, to eat his crusts without previously soaking them in his bottled porter. How interesting are these peculiarities!"

"Half-past eleven."

"PROFESSORS WOODENSCONCE and GRIME, with a degree of good-humour that delights us all, have just arranged to toss for a bottle of mulled port. There has been some discussion whether the payment should be decided by the first toss or the best out of three. Eventually the latter course has been determined on. Deeply do I wish that both gentlemen could win; but that being impossible, I own that my personal aspirations (I speak as an individual,

and do not compromise either you or your readers by this expression of feeling) are with Professor Woodensconce. I have backed that gentleman to the amount of eighteenpence."

"Twenty minutes to twelve."

"PROFESSOR GRIME has inadvertently tossed his half-crown out of one of the cabin-windows, and it has been arranged that the steward shall toss for him. Bets are offered on any side to any amount, but there are no takers.

"PROFESSOR WOODENSCONCE has just called 'woman'; but the coin having lodged in a beam, is a long time coming down again. The interest and suspense of this one moment are beyond anything that can be imagined."

"Twelve o'clock."

"THE mulled port is smoking on the table before me, and Professor Grime has won. Tossing is a game of chance; but on every ground, whether of public or private character, intellectual endowments, or scientific attainments, I cannot help expressing my opinion that Professor Woodensconce *ought* to have come off victorious. There is an exultation about Professor Grime incompatible, I fear, with true greatness."

"A quarter-past twelve."

"PROFESSOR GRIME continues to exult, and to boast of his victory in no very measured terms, observing that he always does win, and that he knew it would be a 'head' beforehand, with many other remarks of a similar nature. Surely this

gentleman is not so lost to every feeling of decency and propriety as not to feel and know the superiority of Professor Woodensconce? Is Professor Grime insane? or does he wish to be reminded in plain language of his true position in society, and the precise level of his acquirements and abilities? Professor Grime will do well to look to this."

"One o'clock.

"I AM writing in bed. The small cabin is illuminated by the feeble light of a flickering lamp suspended from the ceiling; Professor Grime is lying on the opposite shelf on the broad of his back, with his mouth wide open. The scene is indescribably solemn. The rippling of the tide, the noise of the sailors' feet overhead, the gruff voices on the river, the dogs on the shore, the snoring of the passengers, and a constant creaking of every plank in the vessel, are the only sounds that meet the ear. With these exceptions, all is profound silence.

"My curiosity has been within the last moment very much excited. Mr. Slug, who lies above Professor Grime, has cautiously withdrawn the curtains of his berth, and, after looking anxiously out, as if to satisfy himself that his companions are asleep, has taken up the tin tube of which I have before spoken, and is regarding it with great interest. What rare mechanical combination can be contained in that mysterious case? It is evidently a profound secret to all."

"A quarter-past one.

"THE behaviour of Mr. Slug grows more and more mysterious. He has unscrewed the top of

the tube, and now renews his observations upon his companions, evidently to make sure that he is wholly unobserved. He is clearly on the eve of some great experiment. Pray Heaven that it be not a dangerous one; but the interests of science must be promoted, and I am prepared for the worst."

"Five minutes later."

"HE has produced a large pair of scissors, and drawn a roll of some substance, not unlike parchment in appearance, from the tin case. The experiment is about to begin. I must strain my eyes to the utmost, in the attempt to follow its minutest operation."

"Twenty minutes before two."

"I HAVE at length been enabled to ascertain that the tin tube contains a few yards of some celebrated plaster, recommended—as I discover on regarding the label attentively, through my eye-glass—as a preservative against sea-sickness. Mr. Slug has cut it up into small portions, and is now sticking it over himself in every direction."

"Three o'clock."

"PRECISELY a quarter of an hour ago we weighed anchor, and the machinery was suddenly put in motion with a noise so appalling, that Professor Wooden-sconce (who had ascended to his berth by means of a platform of carpet-bags arranged by himself on geometrical principles) darted from his shelf head foremost, and, gaining his feet with all the rapidity of extreme terror, ran wildly into the ladies' cabin, under the impression that we were sinking, and

uttering loud cries for aid. I am assured that the scene which ensued baffles all description. There were one hundred and forty-seven ladies in their respective berths at the time.

"Mr. Slug has remarked, as an additional instance of the extreme ingenuity of the steam-engine as applied to purposes of navigation, that in whatever part of the vessel a passenger's berth may be situated, the machinery always appears to be exactly under his pillow. He intends stating this very beautiful, though simple, discovery to the association."

"Half-past three."

"WE are still in smooth water; that is to say, in as smooth water as a steam-vessel ever can be, for, as Professor Woodensconce (who has just woke up) learnedly remarks, another great point of ingenuity about a steamer is, that it always carries a little storm with it. You can scarcely conceive how exciting the jerking pulsation of the ship becomes. It is a matter of positive difficulty to get to sleep."

"Friday afternoon, six o'clock."

"I REGRET to inform you that Mr. Slug's plaster has proved of no avail. He is in great agony, but has applied several large, additional pieces notwithstanding. How affecting is this extreme devotion to science and pursuit of knowledge under the most trying circumstances!"

"We were extremely happy this morning, and the breakfast was one of the most animated description. Nothing unpleasant occurred until noon, with the exception of Doctor Foxey's brown silk umbrella and

white hat becoming entangled in the machinery while he was explaining to a knot of ladies the construction of the steam-engine. I fear the gravy-soup for lunch was injudicious. We lost a great many passengers almost immediately afterwards."

"Half-past six.

"I AM again in bed. Anything so heart-rending as Mr. Slug's sufferings it has never yet been my lot to witness."

"Seven o'clock.

"A MESSENGER has just come down for a clean pocket-handkerchief from Professor Woodensconce's bag, that unfortunate gentleman being quite unable to leave the deck, and imploring constantly to be thrown overboard. From this man, I understand that Professor Nogo, though in a state of utter exhaustion, clings feebly to the hard biscuit and cold brandy and water, under the impression that they will yet restore him. Such is the triumph of mind over matter.

"Professor Grime is in bed, to all appearance quite well ; but he *will* eat, and it is disagreeable to see him. Has this gentleman no sympathy with the sufferings of his fellow-creatures? If he has, on what principle can he call for mutton-chops—and smile?"

"Black Boy and Stomach-ache,

"Oldcastle, Saturday, noon.

"You will be happy to learn that I have at length arrived here in safety. The town is excessively crowded, and all the private lodgings and hotels are filled with *savans* of both sexes. The tremendous



S.S.

"I had the good fortune to meet Sowster."

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assemblage of intellect that one encounters in every street is in the last degree overwhelming.

"Notwithstanding the throng of people here, I have been fortunate enough to meet with very comfortable accommodation on very reasonable terms, having secured a sofa in the first-floor passage at one guinea per night, which includes permission to take my meals in the bar, on condition that I walk about the streets at all other times, to make room for other gentlemen similarly situated. I have been over the outhouses intended to be devoted to the reception of the various sections, both here and at the Boot-jack and Countenance, and am much delighted with the arrangements. Nothing can exceed the fresh appearance of the saw-dust with which the floors are sprinkled. The forms are of unplanned deal, and the general effect, as you can well imagine, is extremely beautiful."

"Half-past nine."

"THE number and rapidity of the arrivals are quite bewildering. Within the last ten minutes a stage-coach has driven up to the door, filled inside and out with distinguished characters, comprising Mr. Muddlebranes, Mr. Drawley, Professor Muff, Mr. X. Misty, Mr. X. X. Misty, Mr. Purbblind, Professor Rummun, The Honourable and Reverend Mr. Long Eers, Professor John Ketch, Sir William Joltered, Doctor Buffer, Mr. Smith (of London), Mr. Brown (of Edinburgh), Sir Hookham Snivey, and Professor Pumpkinskull. The ten last-named gentlemen were wet through, and looked extremely intelligent."

"Sunday, two o'clock, p.m.

"THE Honourable and Reverend Mr. Long Eers, accompanied by Sir William Joltered, walked and drove this morning. They accomplished the former feat in boots, and the latter in a hired fly. This has naturally given rise to much discussion.

"I have just learned that an interview has taken place at the Boot-jack and Countenance between Sowster, the active and intelligent beadle of this place, and Professor Pumpkinskull, who, as your readers are doubtless aware, is an influential member of the council. I forbear to communicate any of the rumours to which this very extraordinary proceeding has given rise until I have seen Sowster, and endeavoured to ascertain the truth from him."

"Half-past six.

"I ENGAGED a donkey-chaise shortly after writing the above, and proceeded at a brisk trot in the direction of Sowster's residence, passing through a beautiful expanse of country, with red brick buildings on either side, and stopping in the market-place to observe the spot where Mr. Kwakley's hat was blown off yesterday. It is an uneven piece of paving, but has certainly no appearance which would lead one to suppose that any such event had recently occurred there. From this point I proceeded—passing the gas-works and tallow-melter's—to a lane which had been pointed out to me as the beadle's place of residence; and before I had driven a dozen yards farther, I had the good fortune to meet Sowster himself advancing towards me.

"Sowster is a fat man, with a more enlarged

development of that peculiar conformation or countenance which is vulgarly termed a double chin than I remember to have ever seen before. He has also a very red nose, which he attributes to a habit of early rising—so red, indeed, that but for this explanation I should have supposed it to proceed from occasional inebriety. He informed me that he did not feel himself at liberty to relate what had passed between himself and Professor Pumpkinskull, but had no objection to state that it was connected with a matter of police regulation, and added, with peculiar significance, ‘Never was sitch times!’

“You will easily believe that this intelligence gave me considerable surprise, not wholly unmixed with anxiety, and that I lost no time in waiting on Professor Pumpkinskull, and stating the object of my visit. After a few moments’ reflection, the professor, who, I am bound to say, behaved with the utmost politeness, openly avowed (I mark the passage in italics) *that he had requested Sowster to attend on the Monday morning at the Boot-jack and Countenance, to keep off the boys; and that he had further desired that the under-beadle might be stationed, with the same object, at the Black Boy and Stomach-ache!*

“Now I leave this unconstitutional proceeding to your comments and the consideration of your readers. I have yet to learn that a beadle, without the precincts of a church, churchyard, or workhouse, and acting otherwise than under the express orders of churchwardens and overseers in council assembled, to enforce the law against people who come upon the parish, and other offenders, has any lawful authority whatever over the rising youth of this country. I have yet to

learn that a beadle can be called out by any civilian to exercise a domination and despotism over the boys of Britain. I have yet to learn that a beadle will be permitted by the commissioners of poor-law regulation to wear out the soles and heels of his boots in illegal interference with the liberties of people not proved poor or otherwise criminal. I have yet to learn that a beadle has power to stop up the queen's highway at his will and pleasure, or that the whole width of the street is not free and open to any man, boy, or woman in existence, up to the very walls of the houses—ay, be they Black Boys and Stomach-aches, or Boot-jacks and Countenances, I care not."

"Monday.

"THE great day has at length arrived. I have neither eyes, nor ears, nor pens, nor ink, nor paper, for anything but the wonderful proceedings that have astounded my senses. Let me collect my energies and proceed to the account

"SECTION A.—ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY.

"FRONT PARLOUR, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

"*President*—Sir William Joltered. *Vice-Presidents*—Mr. Muddle-branes and Mr. Drawley.

"MR. X. X. MISTY communicated some remarks on the disappearance of dancing-bears from the streets of London, with observations on the exhibition of monkeys as connected with barrel-organs. The writer had observed, with feelings of the utmost pain and regret, that some years ago a sudden and unaccountable change in the public taste took place

with reference to itinerant bears, who, being discountenanced by the populace, gradually fell off one by one from the streets of the metropolis, until not one remained to create a taste for natural history in the breasts of the poor and uninstructed. One bear, indeed—a brown and ragged animal—had lingered about the haunts of his former triumphs, with a worn and dejected visage and feeble limbs, and had essayed to wield his quarter-staff for the amusement of the multitude; but hunger, and an utter want of any due recompense for his abilities, had at length driven him from the field, and it was only too probable that he had fallen a sacrifice to the rising taste for grease. He regretted to add that a similar, and no less lamentable, change had taken place with reference to monkeys. These delightful animals had formerly been almost as plentiful as the organs on the tops of which they were accustomed to sit; the proportion in the year 1829 (it appeared by the parliamentary return) being as one monkey to three organs. Owing, however, to an altered taste in musical instruments, and the substitution, in a great measure, of narrow boxes of music for organs, which left the monkeys nothing to sit upon, this source of public amusement was wholly dried up. Considering it a matter of the deepest importance, in connection with national education, that the people should not lose such opportunities of making themselves acquainted with the manners and customs of two most interesting species of animals, the author submitted that some measures should be immediately taken for the restoration of these pleasing and truly intellectual amusements.

“THE PRESIDENT inquired by what means the honourable member proposed to attain this most desirable end?

“THE AUTHOR submitted that it could be most fully and satisfactorily accomplished, if her Majesty's Government would cause to be brought over to England, and maintained at the public expense, and for the public amusement, such a number of bears as would enable every quarter of the town to be visited—say at least, by three bears a week. No difficulty whatever need be experienced in providing a fitting place for the reception of these animals, as a commodious bear-garden could be erected in the immediate neighbourhood of both Houses of Parliament: obviously the most proper and eligible spot for such an establishment.

“PROFESSOR MULL doubted very much whether any correct ideas of natural history were propagated by the means to which the honourable member had so ably adverted. On the contrary, he believed that they had been the means of diffusing very incorrect and imperfect notions on the subject. He spoke from personal observation and personal experience, when he said that many children of great abilities had been induced to believe, from what they had observed in the streets, at and before the period to which the honourable gentleman had referred, that all monkeys were born in red coats and spangles, and that their hats and feathers also came by nature. He wished to know distinctly whether the honourable gentleman attributed the want of encouragement the bears had met with to the decline of public taste in that respect, or to a want of ability on the part of the bears themselves?

"Mr. X. X. MISTY replied, that he could not bring himself to believe but that there must be a great deal of floating talent among the bears and monkeys generally; which, in the absence of any proper encouragement, was dispersed in other directions.

"PROFESSOR PUMPKINSKULL wished to take that opportunity of calling the attention of the section to a most important and serious point. The author of the treatise just read had alluded to the prevalent taste for bears'-grease as a means of promoting the growth of hair, which undoubtedly was diffused to a very great and (as it appeared to him) very alarming extent. No gentleman attending that section could fail to be aware of the fact that the youth of the present age evinced, by their behaviour in the streets, and at all places of public resort, a considerable lack of that gallantry and gentlemanly feeling which, in more ignorant times, had been thought becoming. He wished to know whether it were possible that a constant outward application of bears'-grease by the young gentlemen about town had imperceptibly infused into those unhappy persons something of the nature and quality of the bear. He shuddered as he threw out the remark; but if this theory, on inquiry, should prove to be well-founded, it would at once explain a great deal of unpleasant eccentricity of behaviour, which, without some such discovery, was wholly unaccountable.

"THE PRESIDENT highly complimented the learned gentleman on his most valuable suggestion, which produced the greatest effect upon the assembly; and remarked that only a week previous he had seen some young gentlemen at a theatre eyeing a box of ladies

with a fierce intensity, which nothing but the influence of some brutish appetite could possibly explain. It was dreadful to reflect that our youth were so rapidly verging into a generation of bears.

"After a scene of scientific enthusiasm it was resolved that this important question should be immediately submitted to the consideration of the council.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know whether any gentleman could inform the section what had become of the dancing-dogs?

"A Member replied, after some hesitation, that on the day after three glee-singers had been committed to prison as criminals by a late most zealous police-magistrate of the metropolis, the dogs had abandoned their professional duties, and dispersed themselves in different quarters of the town to gain a livelihood by less dangerous means. He was given to understand that since that period they had supported themselves by lying in wait for and robbing blind men's poodles.

"MR. FLUMMERY exhibited a twig, claiming to be a veritable branch of that noble tree known to naturalists as the SHAKESPEARE, which has taken root in every land and climate, and gathered under the shade of its broad green boughs the great family of mankind. The learned gentleman remarked that the twig had been undoubtedly called by other names in its time; but that it had been pointed out to him by an old lady in Warwickshire, where the great tree had grown, as a shoot of the genuine SHAKESPEARE, by which name he begged to introduce it to his countrymen.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know what botanical definition the honourable gentleman could afford of the curiosity.

"MR. FLUMMERY expressed his opinion that it was
A DECIDED PLANT.

"SECTION B.—DISPLAY OF MODELS AND MECHANICAL SCIENCE.

"LARGE ROOM, BOOT-JACK AND COUNTENANCE.

"*President*—Mr. Mallett. *Vice-Presidents*—Messrs. Leaver and
"Scroo.

"MR. CRINKLES exhibited a most beautiful and delicate machine, of little larger size than an ordinary snuff-box, manufactured entirely by himself, and composed exclusively of steel, by the aid of which more pockets could be picked in one hour than by the present slow and tedious process in four-and-twenty. The inventor remarked that it had been put into active operation in Fleet Street, the Strand, and other thoroughfares, and had never been once known to fail.

"After some slight delay, occasioned by the various members of the section buttoning their pockets,

"THE PRESIDENT narrowly inspected the invention, and declared that he had never seen a machine of more beautiful or exquisite construction. Would the inventor be good enough to inform the section whether he had taken any and what means for bringing it into general operation?

"MR. CRINKLES stated that, after encountering some preliminary difficulties, he had succeeded in putting himself in communication with Mr. Fogle Hunter, and other gentlemen connected with the swell

mob, who had awarded the invention the very highest and most unqualified approbation. He regretted to say, however, that these distinguished practitioners, in common with a gentleman of the name of Gimlet-eyed Tommy, and other members of a secondary grade of the profession whom he was understood to represent, entertained an insuperable objection to its being brought into general use, on the ground that it would have the inevitable effect of almost entirely superseding manual labour, and throwing a great number of highly-deserving persons out of employment.

“THE PRESIDENT hoped that no such fanciful objections would be allowed to stand in the way of such a great public improvement.

“MR. CRINKLES hoped so too ; but he feared that if the gentlemen of the swell mob persevered in their objection, nothing could be done.

“PROFESSOR GRIME suggested, that surely, in that case, her Majesty’s Government might be prevailed upon to take it up.

“MR. CRINKLES said that if the objection were found to be insuperable he should apply to Parliament, which he thought could not fail to recognise the utility of the invention.

“THE PRESIDENT observed that up to this time Parliament had certainly got on very well without it ; but, as they did their business on a very large scale, he had no doubt they would gladly adopt the improvement. His only fear was that the machine might be worn out by constant working.

“MR. COPPERNOSE called the attention of the section to a proposition of great magnitude and interest,

illustrated by a vast number of models, and stated with much clearness and perspicuity in a treatise entitled 'Practical Suggestions on the necessity of providing some harmless and wholesome relaxation for the young noblemen of England.' His proposition was, that a space of ground of not less than ten miles in length and four in breadth should be purchased by a new company, to be incorporated by Act of Parliament, and inclosed by a brick wall of not less than twelve feet in height. He proposed that it should be laid out with highway roads, turnpikes, bridges, miniature villages, and every object that could conduce to the comfort and glory of Four-in-hand Clubs, so that they might be fairly presumed to require no drive beyond it. This delightful retreat would be fitted up with most commodious and extensive stables, for the convenience of such of the nobility and gentry as had a taste for hostling, and with houses of entertainment furnished in the most expensive and handsome style. It would be further provided with whole streets of door-knockers and bell-handles of extra size, so constructed that they could be easily wrenched off at night, and regularly screwed on again, by attendants provided for the purpose, every day. There would also be gas-lamps of real glass, which could be broken at a comparatively small expense per dozen, and a broad and handsome foot pavement for gentlemen to drive their cabriolets upon when they were humorously disposed—for the full enjoyment of which feat live pedestrians would be procured from the workhouse at a very small charge per head. The place being inclosed, and carefully screened from the intrusion of

the public, there would be no objection to gentlemen laying aside any article of their costume that was considered to interfere with a pleasant frolic, or, indeed, to their walking about without any costume at all, if they liked that better. In short, every facility of enjoyment would be afforded that the most gentlemanly person could possibly desire. But as even these advantages would be incomplete unless there were some means provided of enabling the nobility and gentry to display their prowess when they sallied forth after dinner, and as some inconvenience might be experienced in the event of their being reduced to the necessity of pummelling each other, the inventor had turned his attention to the construction of an entirely new police force, composed exclusively of automaton figures, which, with the assistance of the ingenious Signor Gagliardi, of Windmill Street, in the Haymarket, he had succeeded in making with such nicety, that a policeman, cab-driver, or old woman, made upon the principle of the models exhibited, would walk about until knocked down like any real man ; nay, more, if set upon and beaten by six or eight noblemen or gentlemen, after it was down, the figure would utter divers groans, mingled with entreaties for mercy, thus rendering the illusion complete, and the enjoyment perfect. But the invention did not stop even here ; for station-houses would be built, containing good beds for noblemen and gentlemen during the night, and in the morning they would repair to a commodious police office, where a pantomimic investigation would take place before the automaton magistrates—quite equal to life—who would fine them in so many

counters, with which they would be previously provided for the purpose. This office would be furnished with an inclined plane, for the convenience of any nobleman or gentleman who might wish to bring in his horse as a witness ; and the prisoners would be at perfect liberty, as they were now, to interrupt the complainants as much as they pleased, and to make any remarks that they thought proper. The charge for these amusements would amount to very little more than they already cost, and the inventor submitted that the public would be much benefited and comforted by the proposed arrangement.

“PROFESSOR NOGO wished to be informed what amount of automaton police force it was proposed to raise in the first instance.

“MR. COPPERNOSE replied, that it was proposed to begin with seven divisions of police of a score each, lettered from A. to G inclusive. It was proposed that not more than half this number should be placed on active duty, and that the remainder should be kept on shelves in the police office ready to be called out at a moment's notice.

“THE PRESIDENT, awarding the utmost merit to the ingenious gentleman who had originated the idea, doubted whether the automaton police would quite answer the purpose. He feared that noblemen and gentlemen would perhaps require the excitement of thrashing living subjects.

“MR. COPPERNOSE submitted, that as the usual odds in such cases were ten noblemen or gentlemen to one policeman or cab-driver, it could make very little difference in point of excitement whether the policeman or cab-driver were a man or a block. The

great advantage would be, that a policeman's limbs might be all knocked off, and yet he would be in a condition to do duty next day. He might even give his evidence next morning with his head in his hand, and give it equally well.

"PROFESSOR MUFF.—Will you allow me to ask you, sir, of what materials it is intended that the magistrates' heads shall be composed?

"MR. COPPERNOSE.—The magistrates will have wooden heads of course, and they will be made of the toughest and thickest materials that can possibly be obtained.

"PROFESSOR MUFF.—I am quite satisfied. This is a great invention.

"PROFESSOR NOGO.—I see but one objection to it. It appears to me that the magistrates ought to talk.

"MR. COPPERNOSE no sooner heard this suggestion than he touched a small spring in each of the two models of magistrates which were placed upon the table; one of the figures immediately began to exclaim with great volubility that he was sorry to see gentlemen in such a situation, and the other to express a fear that the policeman was intoxicated.

"The section, as with one accord, declared with a shout of applause that the invention was complete; and the president, much excited, retired with Mr. Coppernose to lay it before the council. On his return,

"MR. TICKLE displayed his newly-invented spectacles, which enabled the wearer to discern, in very bright colours, objects at a great distance, and rendered him wholly blind to those immediately before him. It was, he said, a most valuable and

useful invention, based strictly upon the principle of the human eye.

"THE PRESIDENT required some information upon this point. He had yet to learn that the human eye was remarkable for the peculiarities of which the honourable gentleman had spoken.

"MR. TICKLE was rather astonished to hear this, when the President could not fail to be aware that a large number of most excellent persons and great statesmen could see, with the naked eye, most marvellous horrors on West India plantations, while they could discern nothing whatever in the interior of Manchester cotton mills. He must know, too, with what quickness of perception most people could discover their neighbour's faults, and how very blind they were to their own. If the president differed from the great majority of men in this respect, his eye was a defective one, and it was to assist his vision that these glasses were made.

"MR. BLANK exhibited a model of a fashionable annual, composed of copper-plates, gold leaf, and silk boards, and worked entirely by milk and water.

"MR. PROSEE, after examining the machine, declared it to be so ingeniously composed, that he was wholly unable to discover how it went on at all.

"MR. BLANK.—Nobody can, and that is the beauty of it.

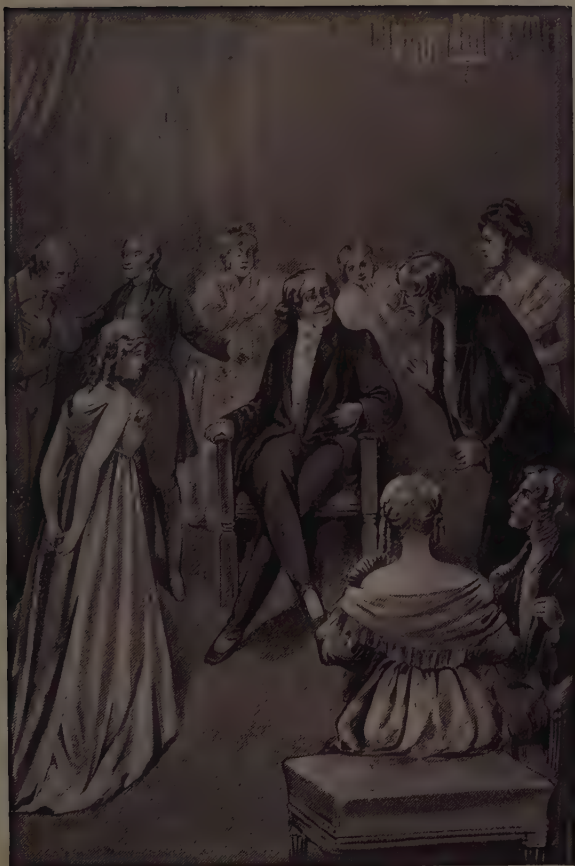
"SECTION C.—ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.

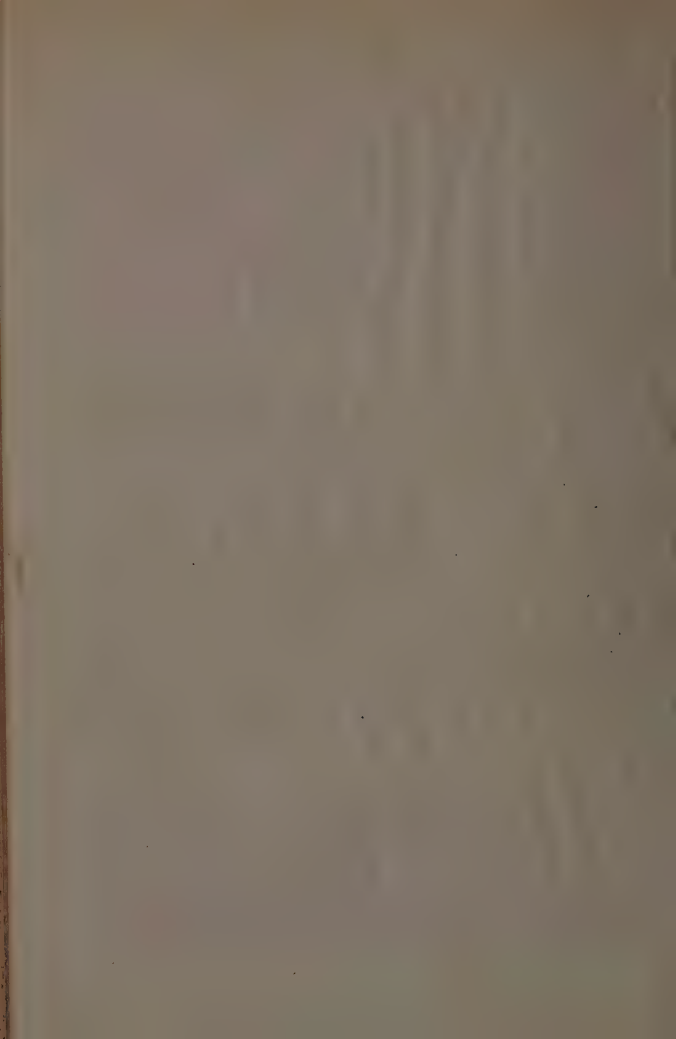
"BAR ROOM, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

"*President* — Dr. Soemup. *Vice-Presidents* — Messrs. Pessel
"and Mortair.

"DR. GRUMMIDGE stated to the section a most interesting case of monomania, and described the

course of treatment he had pursued with perfect success. The patient was a married lady in the middle rank of life, who, having seen another lady at an evening party in a full set of pearls, was suddenly seized with a desire to possess a similar equipment, although her husband's finances were by no means equal to the necessary outlay. Finding her wish ungratified, she fell sick, and the symptoms soon became so alarming, that he (Dr. Grummidge) was called in. At this period the prominent tokens of the disorder were sullenness, a total indisposition to perform domestic duties, great peevishness, and extreme languor, except when pearls were mentioned, at which times the pulse quickened, the eyes grew brighter, the pupils dilated, and the patient, after various incoherent exclamations, burst into a passion of tears, and exclaimed that nobody cared for her, and that she wished herself dead. Finding that the patient's appetite was affected in the presence of company, he began by ordering a total abstinence from all stimulants, and forbidding any sustenance but weak gruel; he then took twenty ounces of blood, applied a blister under each ear, one upon the chest, and another on the back; having done which, and administered five grains of calomel, he left the patient to her repose. The next day she was somewhat low, but decidedly better, and all appearances of irritation were removed. The next day she improved still further, and on the next again. On the fourth there was some appearance of a return of the old symptoms, which no sooner developed themselves, than he administered another dose of calomel, and left strict orders that, unless a decidedly favourable





change occurred within two hours, the patient's head should be immediately shaved to the very last curl. From that moment she began to mend, and, in less than four-and-twenty hours, was perfectly restored. She did not now betray the least emotion at the sight or mention of pearls or any other ornaments. She was cheerful and good-humoured, and a most beneficial change had been effected in her whole temperament and condition.

“MR. PIPKIN (M.R.C.S.) read a short but most interesting communication in which he sought to prove the complete belief of Sir William Courtenay, otherwise Thom, recently shot at Canterbury, in the Homœopathic system. The section would bear in mind that one of the Homœopathic doctrines was that infinitesimal doses of any medicine which would occasion the disease under which the patient laboured, supposing him to be in a healthy state, would cure it. Now, it was a remarkable circumstance—proved in the evidence—that the deceased Thom employed a woman to follow him about all day with a pail of water, assuring her that one drop (a purely homœopathic remedy, the section would observe), placed upon his tongue, after death, would restore him. What was the obvious inference? That Thom, who was marching and countermarching in osier beds, and other swampy places, was impressed with a presentiment that he should be drowned; in which case, had his instructions been complied with, he could not fail to have been brought to life again instantly by his own prescription. As it was, if this woman, or any other person, had administered an infinitesimal dose of lead and gunpowder immediately after he fell, he

would have recovered forthwith. But unhappily the woman concerned did not possess the power of reasoning by analogy, or carrying out a principle, and thus the unfortunate gentleman had been sacrificed to the ignorance of the peasantry.

"SECTION D.—STATISTICS.

"OUT-HOUSE, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

"*President*—Mr. Slug. *Vice-Presidents*—Messrs. Noakes
"and Styles.

"MR. KWAKLEY stated the result of some most ingenious statistical inquiries relative to the difference between the value of the qualification of several members of Parliament as published to the world, and its real nature and amount. After reminding the section that every member of Parliament for a town or borough was supposed to possess a clear freehold estate of three hundred pounds per annum, the honourable gentleman excited great amusement and laughter by stating the exact amount of freehold property possessed by a column of legislators, in which he had included himself. It appeared from this table, that the amount of such income possessed by each was 0 pounds, 0 shillings, and 0 pence, yielding an average of the same. (Great laughter.) It was pretty well known that there were accommodating gentlemen in the habit of furnishing new members with temporary qualifications, to the ownership of which they swore solemnly—of course as a mere matter of form. He argued from these *data* that it was wholly unnecessary for members of Parliament to possess any property at all, especially as when they had none the public could get them so much cheaper.

“SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION, E.—UMBUGOLOGY AND
“DITCHWATERISICS.

“*President*—Mr. Grub. *Vice-Presidents*—Messrs. Dull
“and Dummy.

“A PAPER was read by the secretary descriptive of a bay pony with one eye, which had been seen by the author standing in a butcher's cart at the corner of Newgate Market. The communication described the author of the paper as having, in the prosecution of a mercantile pursuit, betaken himself one Saturday morning last summer from Somers Town to Cheapside ; in the course of which expedition he had beheld the extraordinary appearance above described. The pony had one distinct eye, and it had been pointed out to him by his friend Captain Blunderbore, of the Horse Marines, who assisted the author in his search, that whenever he winked this eye he whisked his tail (possibly to drive the flies off), but that he always winked and whisked at the same time. The animal was lean, spavined, and tottering ; and the author proposed to constitute it of the family of *Fitfordogs-meatauricus*. It certainly did occur to him that there was no case on record of a pony with one clearly-defined and distinct organ of vision, winking and whisking at the same moment.

“MR. Q. J. SNUFFLETOFFLE had heard of a pony winking his eye, and likewise of a pony whisking his tail, but whether they were two ponies or the same pony he could not undertake positively to say. At all events, he was acquainted with no authenticated instance of a simultaneous winking and whisking, and he really could not but doubt the existence of

such a marvellous pony in opposition to all those natural laws by which ponies were governed. Referring, however, to the mere question of his one organ of vision, might he suggest the possibility of this pony having been literally half asleep at the time he was seen, and having closed only one eye.

"THE PRESIDENT observed that, whether the pony was half asleep or fast asleep, there could be no doubt that the association was wide awake, and therefore that they had better get the business over, and go to dinner. He had certainly never seen anything analogous to this pony, but he was not prepared to doubt its existence; for he had seen many queerer ponies in his time, though he did not pretend to have seen any more remarkable donkeys than the other gentlemen around him.

"PROFESSOR JOHN KETCH was then called upon to exhibit the skull of the late Mr. Greenacre, which he produced from a blue bag, remarking, on being invited to make any observations that occurred to him, 'that he'd pound it as that 'ere 'spectable section had never seed a more gamerer cove nor he vos.'

"A most animated discussion upon this interesting relic ensued; and, some difference of opinion arising respecting the real character of the deceased gentleman, Mr. Blubb delivered a lecture upon the cranium before him, clearly showing that Mr. Greenacre possessed the organ of destructiveness to a most unusual extent, with a most remarkable development of the organ of carveativeness. Sir Hookham Snivey was proceeding to combat this opinion, when

Professor Ketch suddenly interrupted the proceedings by exclaiming, with great excitement of manner, 'Walker!'

"THE PRESIDENT begged to call the learned gentleman to order.

"PROFESSOR KETCH.—'Order be blowed! you've got the wrong un, I tell you. It ain't no 'e'd at all; it's a coker-nut as my brother-in-law has been a-carvin', to hornament his new baked tatur-stall wots a-comin' down 'ere vile the 'sociation's in the town. Hand over, vill you?'

"With these words, Professor Ketch hastily repossessed himself of the cocoa-nut, and drew forth the skull, in mistake for which he had exhibited it. A most interesting conversation ensued; but as there appeared some doubt ultimately whether the skull was Mr. Greenacre's, or a hospital patient's, or a pauper's, or a man's, or a woman's, or a monkey's, no particular result was obtained."

"I cannot," says our talented correspondent in conclusion, "I cannot close my account of these gigantic researches and sublime and noble triumphs without repeating a *bon mot* of Professor Woodensconce's, which shows how the greatest minds may occasionally unbend when truth can be presented to listening ears, clothed in an attractive and playful form. I was standing by, when, after a week of feasting and feeding, that learned gentleman, accompanied by the whole body of wonderful men, entered the hall yesterday, where a sumptuous dinner was prepared; where the richest wines sparkled on the board, and fat bucks — propitiatory sacrifices to

learning—sent forth their savoury odours. ‘Ah,’ said Professor Woodensconce, rubbing his hands, ‘this is what we meet for; this is what inspires us; this is what keeps us together, and beckons us onward; this is the *spread* of science, and a glorious spread it is.’”

The Pantomime of Life.

The Pantomime of Life.

BEFORE we plunge headlong into this paper, let us at once confess to a fondness for pantomimes—to a gentle sympathy with clowns and pantaloons—to an unqualified admiration of harlequins and columbines—to a chaste delight in every action of their brief existence, varied and many-coloured as those actions are, and inconsistent though they occasionally be with those rigid and former rules of propriety which regulate the proceedings of meaner and less comprehensive minds. We revel in pantomimes—not because they dazzle one's eyes with tinsel and gold leaf; not because they present to us, once again, the well-beloved chalked faces, and goggle eyes of our childhood; not even because, like Christmas-day, and Twelfth-night and Shrove-Tuesday, and one's own birthday, they come to us but once a year;—our attachment is founded on a graver and a very different reason. A pantomime is to us, a mirror of life; nay more, we maintain that it is so to audiences generally, although they are not aware of it, and that this very circumstance is the secret cause of their amusement and delight.

Let us take a slight example. The scene is a street: an elderly gentleman, with a large face and strongly-marked features, appears. His countenance beams with a sunny smile, and a perpetual dimple is on his broad, red cheek. He is evidently an opulent elderly gentleman, comfortable in circumstances, and well-to-do in the world. He is not unmindful of the

adornment of his person, for he is richly, not to say gaudily, dressed; and that he indulges to a reasonable extent in the pleasures of the table may be inferred from the joyous and oily manner in which he rubs his stomach, by way of informing the audience that he is going home to dinner. In the fulness of his heart, in the fancied security of wealth, in the possession and enjoyment of all the good things of life, the elderly gentleman suddenly loses his footing, and stumbles. How the audience roar! He is set upon by a noisy and officious crowd, who buffet and cuff him unmercifully. They scream with delight! Every time the elderly gentleman struggles to get up, his relentless persecutors knock him down again. The spectators are convulsed with merriment! And when at last the elderly gentleman does get up, and staggers away, despoiled of hat, wig, and clothing, himself battered to pieces, and his watch and money gone, they are exhausted with laughter, and express their merriment and admiration in rounds of applause.

Is this like life? Change the scene to any real street—to the Stock Exchange, or the City banker's; the merchant's counting-house—or even the tradesman's shop. See any one of these men fall—the more suddenly, and the nearer the zenith of his pride and riches, the better. What a wild hollo is raised over his prostrate carcase by the shouting mob; how they whoop and yell as he lies humbled beneath them! Mark how eagerly they set upon him when he is down; and how they mock and deride him as he slinks away. Why, it is the pantomime to the very letter.

Of all the pantomimic *dramatis personæ*, we consider

the pantaloons the most worthless and debauched. Independent of the dislike one naturally feels at seeing a gentleman of his years engaged in pursuits highly unbecoming his gravity and time of life, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that he is a treacherous, worldly-minded old villain, constantly enticing his younger companion, the clown, into acts of fraud or petty larceny, and generally standing aside to watch the result of the enterprise. If it be successful, he never forgets to return for his share of the spoil; but if it turn out a failure, he generally retires with remarkable caution and expedition, and keeps carefully aloof until the affair has blown over. His amorous propensities, too, are eminently disagreeable; and his mode of addressing ladies in the open street at noon-day is downright improper, being usually neither more nor less than a perceptible tickling of the aforesaid ladies in the waist, after committing which, he starts back, manifestly ashamed (as well he may be) of his own indecorum and temerity; continuing, nevertheless, to ogle and beckon to them from a distance in a very unpleasant and immoral manner.

Is there any man who cannot count a dozen pantaloons in his own social circle? Is there any man who has not seen them swarming at the west end of the town on a sunshiny day or a summer's evening, going through the last-named pantomimic feats with as much liquorish energy, and as total an absence of reserve, as if they were on the very stage itself? We can tell upon our fingers a dozen pantaloons of our acquaintance at this moment — capital pantaloons, who have been performing all kinds of strange freaks,

to the great amusement of their friends and acquaintance, for years past ; and who to this day are making such comical and ineffectual attempts to be young and dissolute, that all beholders are like to die with laughter.

Take that old gentleman who has just emerged from the *Café de l'Europe* in the Haymarket, where he has been dining at the expense of the young man upon town with whom he shakes hands as they part at the door of the tavern. The affected warmth of that shake of the hand, the courteous nod, the obvious recollection of the dinner, the savoury flavour of which still hangs upon his lips, are all characteristics of his great prototype. He hobbles away humming an opera tune, and twirling his cane to and fro, with affected carelessness. Suddenly he stops—'tis at the milliner's window. He peeps through one of the large panes of glass ; and, his view of the ladies within being obstructed by the Indian shawls, directs his attentions to the young girl with the band-box in her hand, who is gazing in at the window also. See ! he draws beside her. He coughs ; she turns away from him. He draws near her again ; she disregards him. He gleefully chucks her under the chin, and, retreating a few steps, nods and beckons with fantastic grimaces, while the girl bestows a contemptuous and supercilious look upon his wrinkled visage. She turns away with a flounce, and the old gentleman trots after her with a toothless chuckle. The pantaloon to the life !

But the close resemblance which the clowns of the stage bear to those of everyday life is perfectly extraordinary. Some people talk with a sigh of the

decline of pantomime, and murmur in low and dismal tones the name of Grimaldi. We mean no disparagement to the worthy and excellent old man when we say that this is downright nonsense. Clowns that beat Grimaldi all to nothing turn up every day, and nobody patronises them—more's the pity!

“I know what you mean,” says some dirty-faced patron of Mr. Osbaldistone's, laying down the Miscellany when he has got thus far, and bestowing upon vacancy a most knowing glance; “you mean C. J. Smith as did Guy Fawkes, and George Barnwell at the Garden.” The dirty-faced gentleman has hardly uttered the words, when he is interrupted by a young gentleman in no shirt-collar and a Petersham coat. “No, no,” says the young gentleman; “he means Brown, King, and Gibson, at the 'Delphi.” Now, with great deference both to the first-named gentleman with the dirty face, and the last-named gentleman in the non-existing shirt-collar, we do *not* mean either the performer who so grotesquely burlesqued the Popish conspirator, or the three unchangeables who have been dancing the same dance under different imposing titles, and doing the same thing under various high-sounding names for some five or six years last past. We have no sooner made this avowal, than the public, who have hitherto been silent witnesses of the dispute, inquire what on earth it is we *do* mean; and, with becoming respect, we proceed to tell them.

It is very well known to all playgoers and pantomime-seers, that the scenes in which a theatrical clown is at the very height of his glory are those which are described in the play-bills as “Cheesemonger's shop and Crockery warehouse,” or “Tailor's

shop, and Mrs. Queertable's boarding-house," or places bearing some such title, where the great fun of the thing consists in the hero's taking lodgings which he has not the slightest intention of paying for, or obtaining goods under false pretences, or abstracting the stock-in-trade of the respectable shopkeeper next door, or robbing warehouse porters as they pass under his window, or, to shorten the catalogue, in his swindling everybody he possibly can, it only remaining to be observed that, the more extensive the swindling is, and the more barefaced the impudence of the swindler, the greater the rapture and ecstasy of the audience. Now it is a most remarkable fact that precisely this sort of thing occurs in real life day after day, and nobody sees the humour of it. Let us illustrate our position by detailing the plot of this portion of the pantomime—not of the theatre, but of life.

The Honourable Captain Fitz-Whisker Fiercy, attended by his livery servant Do'em—a most respectable servant to look at, who has grown gray in the service of the captain's family—views, treats for, and ultimately obtains possession of, the unfurnished house, such a number, such a street. All the tradesmen in the neighbourhood are in agonies of competition for the captain's custom; the captain is a good-natured, kind-hearted, easy man, and, to avoid being the cause of disappointment to any, he most handsomely gives orders to all. Hampers of wine, baskets of provisions, cart-loads of furniture, boxes of jewellery; supplies of luxuries of the costliest description, flock to the house of the Honourable Captain Fitz-Whisker Fiercy, where they are received with

the utmost readiness by the highly respectable Do'em ; while the captain himself struts and swaggers about with that compound air of conscious superiority and general bloodthirstiness which a military captain should always, and does most times, wear, to the admiration and terror of plebeian men. But the tradesmen's backs are no sooner turned, than the captain, with all the eccentricity of a mighty mind, and assisted by the faithful Do'em, whose devoted fidelity is not the least touching part of his character, disposes of everything to great advantage ; for, although the articles fetch small sums, still they are sold considerably above cost price, the cost to the captain having been nothing at all. After various manœuvres, the imposture is discovered, Fitz-Fiercy and Do'em are recognised as confederates, and the police-office to which they are both taken is thronged with their dupes.

Who can fail to recognise in this the exact counterpart of the best portion of a theatrical pantomime—Fitz-Whisker Fiercy by the clown ; Do'em by the pantaloon ; and supernumeraries by the tradesmen ? The best of the joke, too, is that the very coal-merchant who is loudest in his complaints against the person who defrauded him, is the identical man who sat in the centre of the very front row of the pit last night and laughed the most boisterously at this very same thing—and not so well done either. Talk of Grimaldi, we say again ! Did Grimaldi, in his best days, ever do anything in this way equal to Da Costa ?

The mention of this latter justly celebrated clown reminds us of his last piece of humour, the fraudulently obtaining certain stamped acceptances from a young

gentleman in the army. We had scarcely laid down our pen to contemplate for a few moments this admirable actor's performance of that exquisite practical joke, than a new branch of our subject flashed suddenly upon us. So we take it up again at once.

All people who have been behind the scenes, and most people who have been before them, know, that in the representation of a pantomime, a good many men are sent upon the stage for the express purpose of being cheated, or knocked down, or both. Now, down to a moment ago, we had never been able to understand for what possible purpose a great number of odd, lazy, large-headed men, whom one is in the habit of meeting here, and there, and everywhere, could ever have been created. We see it all, now. They are the supernumeraries in the pantomime of life; the men who have been thrust into it, with no other view than to be constantly tumbling over each other, and running their heads against all sorts of strange things. We sat opposite to one of these men at a supper-table, only last week. Now we think of it, he was exactly like the gentlemen with the paste-board heads and faces, who do the corresponding business in the theatrical pantomimes; there was the same broad, stolid simper—the same dull, leaden eye—the same unmeaning, vacant stare; and whatever was said, or whatever was done, he always came in at precisely the wrong place, or jostled against something that he had not the slightest business with. We looked at the man across the table again and again; and could not satisfy ourselves what race of beings to class him with. How very odd that this never occurred to us before!

We will frankly own that we have been much troubled with the harlequin. We see harlequins of so many kinds in the real living pantomime, that we hardly know which to select as the proper fellow of him of the theatres. At one time we were disposed to think that the harlequin was neither more nor less than a young man of family and independent property, who had run away with an opera dancer, and was fooling his life and his means away in light and trivial amusements. On reflection, however, we remember that harlequins are occasionally guilty of witty, and even clever acts, and we are rather disposed to acquit our young men of family and independent property, generally speaking, of any such misdemeanours. On a more mature consideration of the subject, we have arrived at the conclusion that the harlequins of life are just ordinary men, to be found in no particular walk or degree, on whom a certain station, or particular conjunction of circumstances, confers the magic wand. And this brings us to a few words on the pantomime of public and political life, which we shall say at once, and then conclude—merely premising in this place that we decline any reference whatever to the columbine, being in no wise satisfied of the nature of her connection with her parti-coloured lover, and not feeling by any means clear that we should be justified in introducing her to the virtuous and respectable ladies who peruse our lucubrations.

We take it that the commencement of a Session of Parliament is neither more nor less than the drawing up of the curtain for a grand comic pantomime, and that his Majesty's most gracious speech

on the opening thereof may be not inaptly compared to the clown's opening speech of "Here we are!" "My lords and gentlemen, here we are!" appears, to our mind at least, to be a very good abstract of the point and meaning of the propitiatory address of the ministry. When we remember how frequently this speech is made, immediately after *the change* too, the parallel is quite perfect, and still more singular.

Perhaps the cast of our political pantomime never was richer than at this day. We are particularly strong in clowns. At no former time, we should say, have we had such astonishing tumblers, or performers so ready to go through the whole of their feats for the amusement of an admiring throng. Their extreme readiness to exhibit, indeed, has given rise to some ill-natured reflections; it having been objected that by exhibiting gratuitously through the country when the theatre is closed, they reduce themselves to the level of mountebanks, and thereby tend to degrade the respectability of the profession. Certainly Grimaldi never did this sort of thing; and though Brown, King, and Gibson have gone to the Surrey in vacation time, and Mr. C. J. Smith has ruralised at Sadler's Wells, we find no theatrical precedent for a general tumbling through the country, except in the gentleman, name unknown, who threw summersets on behalf of the late Mr. Richardson, and who is no authority either, because he had never been on the regular boards.

But, laying aside this question, which after all is a mere matter of taste, we may reflect with pride and gratification of heart on the proficiency of our

clowns as exhibited in the season. Night after night will they twist and tumble about, till two, three, and four o'clock in the morning ; playing the strangest antics, and giving each other the funniest slaps on the face that can possibly be imagined, without evincing the smallest tokens of fatigue. The strange noises, the confusion, the shouting and roaring, amid which all this is done, too, would put to shame the most turbulent sixpenny gallery that ever yelled through a Boxing-night.

It is especially curious to behold one of these clowns compelled to go through the most surprising contortions by the irresistible influence of the wand of office, which his leader or harlequin holds above his head. Acted upon by this wonderful charm he will become perfectly motionless, moving neither hand, foot, nor finger, and will even lose the faculty of speech at an instant's notice ; or, on the other hand, he will become all life and animation if required, pouring forth a torrent of words without sense or meaning, throwing himself into the wildest and most fantastic contortions, and even grovelling on the earth and licking up the dust. These exhibitions are more curious than pleasing ; indeed, they are rather disgusting than otherwise, except to the admirers of such things, with whom we confess we have no fellow-feeling.

Strange tricks—very strange tricks—are also performed by the harlequin who holds for the time being the magic wand which we have just mentioned. The mere waving it before a man's eyes will dispossess his brains of all the notions previously stored there, and fill it with an entirely new set of ideas ; one

gentle tap on the back will alter the colour of a man's coat completely; and there are some expert performers, who, having this wand held first on one side and then on the other, will change from side to side, turning their coats at every evolution, with so much rapidity and dexterity that the quickest eye can scarcely detect their motions. Occasionally, the genius who confers the wand, wrests it from the hand of the temporary possessor, and consigns it to some new performer; on which occasions all the characters change sides, and then the race and the hard knocks begin anew.

We might have extended this chapter to a much greater length—we might have carried the comparison into the liberal professions—we might have shown, as was in fact our original purpose, that each is in itself a little pantomime with scenes and characters of its own, complete; but, as we fear we have been quite lengthy enough already, we shall leave this chapter just where it is. A gentleman, not altogether unknown as a dramatic poet, wrote thus a year or two ago—

“All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:”

and we, tracking out his footsteps at the scarcely-worth-mentioning little distance of a few millions of leagues behind, venture to add, by way of new reading, that he meant a Pantomime, and that we are all actors in The Pantomime of Life.

Mr. Robert Bolton.

the

“Gentleman Connected with the Press.”

Mr. Robert Bolton,

the

“Gentleman Connected with the Press.”

IN the parlour of the Green Dragon, a public-house in the immediate neighbourhood of Westminster Bridge, everybody talks politics, every evening, the great political authority being Mr. Robert Bolton, an individual who defines himself as a “gentleman connected with the press,” which is a definition of peculiar indefiniteness. Mr. Robert Bolton's regular circle of admirers and listeners are an undertaker, a greengrocer, a hairdresser, a baker with a large stomach and a head on the top of it, with two particularly short legs, and a thin man in black—name, profession, and pursuit unknown, who always sits in the same position, always displays the same long, vacant face, and never opens his lips, surrounded as he is by most enthusiastic conversation, except to puff forth a volume of tobacco smoke, or give vent to a very snappy, loud, and shrill *hem!* The conversation sometimes turns upon literature, Mr. Bolton being a literary character, and always upon such news of the day as is exclusively possessed by that talented individual. I found myself (of course, accidentally) in the Green Dragon the other evening, and, being somewhat amused by the following conversation, preserved it.

“Can you lend me a ten pound note till

Christmas?" inquired the hairdresser of the stomach.

"Where's your security, Mr. Clip?"

"My stock in trade—there's enough of it, I'm thinking, Mr. Thicknesse. Some fifty wigs, two poles, half a dozen head blocks, and a dead Bruin."

"No, I won't, then," growled out Thicknesse. "I lends nothing on the security of the whigs or the Poles either. As for whigs, they're cheats; as for the Poles, they've got no cash. I never have nothing to do with blockheads, unless I can't avoid it (ironically), and a dead bear's about as much use to me as I could be to a dead bear."

"Well, then," urged the other, "there's a book as belonged to Pope, 'Byron's Poems,' valued at forty pounds, because it's got Pope's identical scratch on the back; what do you think of that for security?"

"Well, to be sure!" cried the baker. "But how d'ye mean, Mr. Clip?"

"Mean! why, that it's got the *hottergruff* of Pope.

'Steal not this book, for fear of hangman's rope;
For it belongs to Alexander Pope.'

All that's written on the inside of the binding of the book; so, as my son says, we're *bound* to believe it."

"Well, sir," observed the undertaker deferentially, and in a half-whisper, leaning over the table, and knocking over the hairdresser's grog as he spoke, "that argument's very easy upset."

"Perhaps, sir," said Clip, a little flurried, "you'll pay for the first upset afore you thinks of another."

"Now," said the undertaker, bowing amicably to the hairdresser, "I *think*, I says I *think*—you'll excuse me, Mr. Clip, I *think*, you see, that won't go down with the present company—unfortunately, my master had the honour of making the coffin of that ere lord's housemaid, not no more nor twenty year ago. Don't think I'm proud on it, gentlemen; others might be; but I hate rank of any sort. I've no more respect for a lord's footman than I have for any respectable tradesman in this room. I may say no more nor I have for Mr. Clip! (Bowing.) Therefore, that ere lord must have been born long after Pope died. And it's a logical interference to defer, that they neither of them lived at the same time. So what I mean is this here, that Pope never had no book, never seed, felt, never smelt no book (triumphantly) as belonged to that ere lord. And, gentlemen, when I consider how patiently you have 'eared the ideas what I have expressed, I feel bound, as the best way to reward you for the kindness you have exhibited, to sit down without saying anything more—partickler as I perceive a worthier visitor nor myself is just entered. I am not in the habit of paying compliments, gentlemen; when I do, therefore, I hope I strikes with double force."

"Ah, Mr. Murgatroyd! what's all this about striking with double force?" said the object of the above remark, as he entered. "I never excuse a man's getting into a rage during winter, even when he's seated so close to the fire as you are. It is very injudicious to put yourself into such a perspiration. What is the cause of this extreme physical and mental excitement, sir?"

Such was the very philosophical address of Mr. Robert Bolton, a shorthand-writer, as he termed himself—a bit of equivoque passing current among his fraternity, which must give the uninitiated a vast idea of the establishment of the ministerial organ, while to the initiated it signifies that no one paper can lay claim to the enjoyment of their services. Mr. Bolton was a young man, with a somewhat sickly and very dissipated expression of countenance. His habiliments were composed of an exquisite union of gentility, slovenliness, assumption, simplicity, *newness*, and old age. Half of him was dressed for the winter, the other half for the summer. His hat was of the newest cut, the D'Orsay; his trousers had been white, but the inroads of mud and ink, etc., had given them a piebald appearance; round his throat he wore a very high black cravat of the most tyrannical stiffness, while his *tout ensemble* was hidden beneath the enormous folds of an old brown poodle-collared greatcoat, which was closely buttoned up to the aforesaid cravat. His fingers peeped through the ends of his black kid gloves, and two of the toes of each foot took a similar view of society through the extremities of his high-lows. Sacred to the bare walls of his garret be the mysteries of his interior dress! He was a short, spare man, of a somewhat inferior deportment. Everybody seemed influenced by his entry into the room; and his salutation of each member partook of the patronising. The hairdresser made way for him between himself and the stomach. A minute afterwards he had taken possession of his pint and pipe. A pause in the conversation took place.

Everybody was waiting, anxious for his first observation.

"Horrid murder in Westminster this morning," observed Mr. Bolton.

Everybody changed their positions. All eyes were fixed upon the man of paragraphs.

"A baker murdered his son by boiling him in a copper," said Mr. Bolton.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed everybody, in simultaneous horror.

"Boiled him, gentlemen!" added Mr. Bolton, with the most effective emphasis; "*boiled htm!*"

"And the particulars, Mr. B.," inquired the hairdresser, "the particulars?"

Mr. Bolton took a very long draught of porter, and some two or three dozen whiffs of tobacco, doubtless to instil into the commercial capacities of the company the superiority of a gentleman connected with the press, and then said—

"The man was a baker, gentlemen. (Every one looked at the baker present, who stared at Bolton.) His victim, being his son, also was necessarily the son of a baker. The wretched murderer had a wife, whom he was frequently in the habit, while in an intoxicated state, of kicking, pummelling, flinging mugs at, knocking down, and half-killing while in bed, by inserting in her mouth a considerable portion of a sheet or blanket."

The speaker took another draught, everybody looked at everybody else, and exclaimed, "Horrid!"

"It appears in evidence, gentlemen," continued Mr. Bolton, "that, on the evening of yesterday, Sawyer, the baker, came home in a reprehensible

state of beer. Mrs. S., connubially considerate, carried him in that condition upstairs into his chamber, and consigned him to their mutual couch. In a minute or two she lay sleeping beside the man whom the morrow's dawn beheld a murderer! (Entire silence informed the reporter that his picture had attained the awful effect he desired.) The son came home about an hour afterwards, opened the door, and went up to bed. Scarcely (gentlemen, conceive his feelings of alarm), scarcely had he taken off his indescribables, when shrieks (to his experienced ear, *maternal* shrieks) scared the silence of surrounding night. He put his indescribables on again, and ran downstairs. He opened the door of the parental bed-chamber. His father was dancing upon his mother. What must have been his feelings! In the agony of the minute he rushed at his male parent as he was about to plunge a knife into the side of his female. The mother shrieked. The father caught the son (who had wrested the knife from the paternal grasp) up in his arms, carried him downstairs, shoved him into a copper of boiling water among some linen, closed the lid, and jumped upon the top of it, in which position he was found with a ferocious countenance by the mother, who arrived in the melancholy wash-house just as he had so settled himself.

“Where's my boy?” shrieked the mother.

“In that copper, boiling,” coolly replied the benign father.

“Struck by the awful intelligence, the mother rushed from the house, and alarmed the neighbourhood. The police entered a minute afterwards.

The father, having bolted the wash-house door, had bolted himself. They dragged the lifeless body of the boiled baker from the cauldron, and, with a promptitude commendable in men of their station, they immediately carried it to the station-house. Subsequently, the baker was apprehended while seated on the top of a lamp-post in Parliament Street, lighting his pipe."

The whole horrible ideality of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, condensed into the pithy effect of a ten-line paragraph, could not possibly have so affected the narrator's auditory. Silence, the purest and most noble of all kinds of applause, bore ample testimony to the barbarity of the baker, as well as to Bolton's knack of narration; and it was only broken after some minutes had elapsed by interjectional expressions of the intense indignation of every man present. The baker wondered how a British baker could so disgrace himself and the highly honourable calling to which he belonged; and the others indulged in a variety of wonderments connected with the subject; among which not the least wonderment was that which was awakened by the genius and information of Mr. Robert Bolton, who, after a glowing eulogium on himself, and his unspeakable influence with the daily press, was proceeding, with a most solemn countenance, to hear the pros and cons of the Pope autograph question, when I took up my hat, and left.

Some Particulars Concerning a
Lion.

Some Particulars Concerning a Lion.

WE have a great respect for lions in the abstract. In common with most other people, we have heard and read of many instances of their bravery and generosity. We have duly admired that heroic self-denial and charming philanthropy which prompts them never to eat people except when they are hungry, and we have been deeply impressed with a becoming sense of the politeness they are said to display towards unmarried ladies of a certain state. All natural histories teem with anecdotes illustrative of their excellent qualities ; and one old spelling book in particular recounts a touching instance of an old lion, of high moral dignity and stern principle, who felt it his imperative duty to devour a young man who had contracted a habit of swearing, as a striking example to the rising generation.

All this is extremely pleasant to reflect upon, and, indeed, says a very great deal in favour of lions as a mass. We are bound to state, however, that such individual lions as we have happened to fall in with have not put forth any very striking characteristics, and have not acted up to the chivalrous character assigned them by their chroniclers. We never saw a lion in what is called his natural state, certainly ; that is to say, we have never met a lion out walking in a forest, or crouching in his lair under a tropical sun, waiting till his dinner should happen to come

by, hot from the baker's. But we have seen some under the influence of captivity, and the pressure of misfortune ; and we must say that they appeared to us very apathetic, heavy-headed fellows.

The lion at the Zoological Gardens, for instance. He is all very well ; he has an undeniable mane, and looks very fierce ; but, Lord bless us ! what of that ? The lions of the fashionable world look just as ferocious, and are the most harmless creatures breathing. A box-lobby lion or a Regent Street animal will put on a most terrible aspect, and roar fearfully, if you affront him ; but he will never bite, and, if you offer to attack him manfully, will fairly turn tail and sneak off. Doubtless these creatures roam about sometimes in herds, and, if they meet any especially meek-looking and peaceably-disposed fellow, will endeavour to frighten him ; but the faintest show of a vigorous resistance is sufficient to scare them even then. These are pleasant characteristics, whereas we make it matter of distinct charge against the Zoological lion and his brethren at the fairs, that they are sleepy, dreamy, sluggish quadrupeds.

We do not remember to have ever seen one of them perfectly awake, except at feeding-time. In every respect we uphold the biped lions against their four-footed namesakes, and we boldly challenge controversy upon the subject.

With these opinions it may be easily imagined that our curiosity and interest were very much excited the other day, when a lady of our acquaintance called on us and resolutely declined to accept our refusal of her invitation to an evening party ; "for," said she, "I have got a lion coming." We at once

retracted our plea of a prior engagement, and became as anxious to go, as we had previously been to stay away.

We went early, and posted ourselves in an eligible part of the drawing-room, from whence we could hope to obtain a full view of the interesting animal. Two or three hours passed, the quadrilles began, the room filled ; but no lion appeared. The lady of the house became inconsolable—for it is one of the peculiar privileges of these lions to make solemn appointments and never keep them—when all of a sudden there came a tremendous double rap at the street door, and the master of the house, after gliding out (unobserved as he flattered himself) to peep over the banisters, came into the room, rubbing his hands together with great glee, and cried out in a very important voice, “My dear, Mr. — (naming the lion) has this moment arrived.”

Upon this, all eyes were turned towards the door, and we observed several young ladies, who had been laughing and conversing previously with great gaiety and good-humour, grow extremely quiet and sentimental ; while some young gentlemen, who had been cutting great figures in the facetious and small-talk way, suddenly sank very obviously in the estimation of the company, and were looked upon with great coldness and indifference. Even the young man who had been ordered from the music shop to play the pianoforte was visibly affected, and struck several false notes in the excess of his excitement.

All this time there was a great talking outside, more than once accompanied by a loud laugh, and

a cry of "Oh ! capital ! excellent !" from which we inferred that the lion was jocose, and that these exclamations were occasioned by the transports of his keeper and our host. Nor were we deceived ; for when the lion at last appeared, we overheard his keeper, who was a little prim man, whisper to several gentlemen of his acquaintance, with uplifted hands, and every expression of half-suppressed admiration, that —— (naming the lion again) was in *such* cue to-night !

The lion was a literary one. Of course, there were a vast number of people present who had admired his roarings, and were anxious to be introduced to him ; and very pleasant it was to see them brought up for the purpose, and to observe the patient dignity with which he received all their patting and caressing. This brought forcibly to our mind what we had so often witnessed at country fairs, where the other lions are compelled to go through as many forms of courtesy as they chance to be acquainted with, just as often as admiring parties happen to drop in upon them.

While the lion was exhibiting in this way, his keeper was not idle, for he mingled among the crowd, and spread his praises most industriously. To one gentleman he whispered some very choice thing that the noble animal had said in the very act of coming upstairs, which, of course, rendered the mental effort still more astonishing ; to another he murmured a hasty account of a grand dinner that had taken place the day before, where twenty-seven gentlemen had got up all at once to demand an extra cheer for the lion ; and to the ladies he made sundry promises

of interceding to procure the majestic brute's sign-manual for their albums. Then, there were little private consultations in different corners, relative to the personal appearance and stature of the lion; whether he was shorter than they had expected to see him, or taller, or thinner, or fatter, or younger, or older; whether he was like his portrait, or unlike it; and whether the particular shade of his eyes was black, or blue, or hazel, or green, or yellow, or mixture. At all these consultations the keeper assisted; and, in short, the lion was the sole and single subject of discussion till they sat him down to whist, and then the people relapsed into their old topics of conversation — themselves and each other.

We must confess that we looked forward with no slight impatience to the announcement of supper; for if you wish to see a tame lion under particularly favourable circumstances, feeding-time is the period of all others to pitch upon. We were therefore very much delighted to observe a sensation among the guests, which we well knew how to interpret, and immediately afterwards to behold the lion escorting the lady of the house downstairs. We offered our arm to an elderly female of our acquaintance, who — dear old soul! — is the very best person that ever lived, to lead down to any meal; for, be the room ever so small, or the party ever so large, she is sure, by some intuitive perception of the eligible, to push and pull herself and conductor close to the best dishes on the table — we say we offered our arm to this elderly female, and, descending the stairs shortly after

the lion, were fortunate enough to obtain a seat nearly opposite him.

Of course the keeper was there already. He had planted himself at precisely that distance from his charge which afforded him a decent pretext for raising his voice, when he addressed him, to so loud a key, as could not fail to attract the attention of the whole company, and immediately began to apply himself seriously to the task of bringing the lion out, and putting him through the whole of his manœuvres. Such flashes of wit as he elicited from the lion! First of all, they began to make puns upon a salt-cellar, and then upon the breast of a fowl, and then upon the trifle; but the best jokes of all were decidedly on the lobster salad, upon which latter subject the lion came out most vigorously, and, in the opinion of the most competent authorities, quite outshone himself. This is a very excellent mode of shining in society, and is founded, we humbly conceive, upon the classic model of the dialogues between Mr. Punch and his friend the proprietor, wherein the latter takes all the uphill work, and is content to pioneer to the jokes and repartees of Mr. P. himself, who never fails to gain great credit and excite much laughter thereby. Whatever it be founded on, however, we recommend it to all lions, present and to come; for in this instance it succeeded to admiration, and perfectly dazzled the whole body of hearers.

When the salt-cellar, and the fowl's breast, and the trifle, and the lobster salad were all exhausted, and could not afford standing room for another solitary witticism, the keeper performed that very dangerous feat which is still done with some of the

caravan lions, although in one instance it terminated fatally, of putting his head in the animal's mouth, and placing himself entirely at its mercy. Boswell frequently presents a melancholy instance of the lamentable results of this achievement, and other keepers and jackals have been terribly lacerated for their daring. It is due to our lion to state, that he condescended to be trifled with, in the most gentle manner, and finally went home with the showman in a hack cab: perfectly peaceable, but slightly fuddled.

Being in a contemplative mood, we were led to make some reflections upon the character and conduct of this genus of lions as we walked homewards, and we were not long in arriving at the conclusion that our former impression in their favour was very much strengthened and confirmed by what we had recently seen. While the other lions receive company and compliments in a sullen, moody, not to say snarling, manner, these appear flattered by the attentions that are paid them; while those conceal themselves to the utmost of their power from the vulgar gaze, these court the popular eye, and, unlike their brethren, whom nothing short of compulsion will move to exertion, are ever ready to display their acquirements to the wondering throng. We have known bears of undoubted ability who, when the expectations of a large audience have been wound up to the utmost pitch, have peremptorily refused to dance; well-taught monkeys, who have unaccountably objected to exhibit on the slack wire; and elephants of unquestioned genius, who have suddenly declined to turn the barrel-organ;

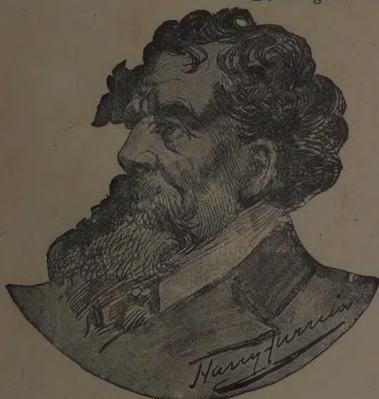
but we never once knew or heard of a bip lion, literary or otherwise—and we state it as fact which is highly creditable to the whole species—who, occasion offering, did not seize with avidity on any opportunity which was afforded him of performing to his heart's content on the first violin.

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